AUSTRALIAN AND BRITISH

SOCCER WEEKLY

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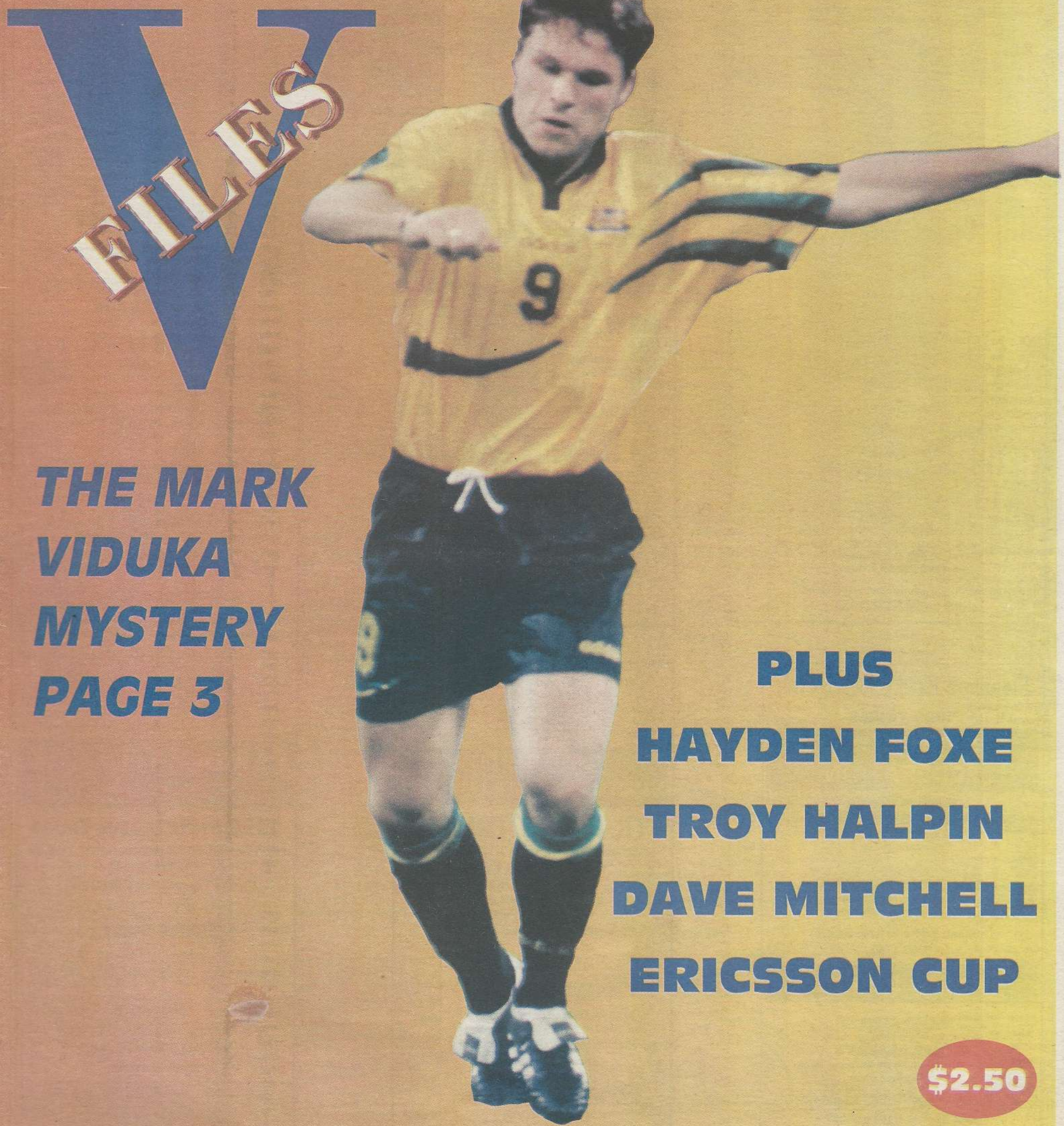

THE MARK VIDUKA MYSTERY PAGE 3

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SOCCER WEEKLY

AUSTRALIAN & BRITISH SOCCER WEEKLY

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EDITOR: ....Aidan Ormond
LAYOUT CO-ORDINATOR ....A.D. Akratos
LAYOUT/TYPESETTING: ....Mary Quartly
....Joanne El-Lakkis, Alamita Vea
SCANDESK: ....Alex Slafakas
COLOUR SCANS: ....Bill Hawthorne
FILM PLANNING: ....Nick Rekoumis
....Nick Philips

CORRESPONDENTS
MELBOURNE: ....Dwyght Tuffnell
QUEENSLAND: ....Glenn Davis
WESTERN AUSTRALIA: ....Richard Kreider
WOMEN'S SOCCER: ....Janene Mar

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS: A.D. Akratos, Mark Fowler, Roy Hay, Craig Wilson, Daryl Katz, Rebecca Stanton, Daniel Glorelando (W. Exp.)
Sydney Reporter: ....John Economos

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◆ **Deadline for contributions, articles and advertising is 3 days PRIOR to issue date.**

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Hills United Soccer Club

Pioneer Pioneer

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Pioneer Building Products

Wishes to inform interested players that 1st Grade and Under 21s commences on

Tuesday:
8th December 98
Thursday:
10th December 98

At Fred Caterson Reserve at 7.00pm
OFF GILBERT RD, CASTLE HILL

New Coaching Staff lead by Senior Coach: Fred Mesiti
Reserve Grade: Ken Johnstone
Under 18s: George Zoratto

For further inquiries: Contact FRED MESITI
on Phone: 0418 280 922

FRASER PARK
SOCCER CLUB

NSW STATE LEAGUE

SELECTION TRIALS
7.00PM – 9.00PM
TUESDAY 8 DEC / THURS 10 DEC
VENUE
FRASER PARK
100 Marrickville Rd, Marrickville
FURTHER ENQUIRIES PLEASE CONTACT
Head Coach – Tony Dunn 9204 2742
(ALL HOURS) OR Roger Neto 0419 200 484
Club 9557 4130

POSITION VACANT
Physiotherapist or Sports Trainer
Level 2 contact above

Mt Pritchard Federation Soccer Club

COACHES REQUIRED FOR CADET LEAGUE

UNDER 11 & UNDER 12
Applicants should have Level 2 Certificate and apply in writing no later than 30 November 1998 and forwarded to Secretary
Mt Pritchard Federation Soccer Club
7 Maranie Ave, ST MARYS 2760

TRIALS
CADET LEAGUE U11 & U12
6pm Tuesday & Thursday
8 & 10 December
Amalfi Park — Graham Ave, Lurnea

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Sue Hartas	967 34 939	0414 701 489
Santo Caltabiano	9602 2363	A/Hours
Frank Dryden	9608 1290	A/Hours

Stanmore Hawks Soccer Club

1999 TRIALS

DIVISION ONE FEDERATION

Tuesdays & Thursdays
TEMPE RESERVE
Holebeach Street, Tempe
Commencing 6.00pm

Sundays
MAHONEY RESERVE
Illawarra Rd, Marrickville
Commencing 9.00am

Contact: Eddie Briscoe (coach)
9387 1760

Junior League

Under 11s and Under 12s
Wednesdays
TEMPE RESERVE
Holebeach Street, Tempe
Commencing 6.00pm

Contact: Steve (club secretary)
964 2178 or 0419 686 569

HURSTVILLE CITY
MINOTAURS SOCCER CLUB INC.

TRAINING/TRIALS
Commencing Wednesday 2/12/98 (7pm)
Beverly Hills Park
Vanessa St, Beverly Hills
For approximately 4 weeks
1st Grade, U/21 & U/18
Competing in 1st Division State League

"ALSO TRIALS"
For the "newly formed" Under 11s (born in 1988) and 12s (born in 1987)
Cadet Youth League
for 1999 at Beverly Hills Park, Vanessa St, Beverly Hills at 6.00pm on Wednesday 2/12/98.
Any enquiries contact:
PETER SARIKARIS
0412 407 830
OR 9150 8279

PARRAMATTA CITY
SOCCER CLUB

1999 STATE LEAGUE TRIALS
NEW State Cadet League, Under 11 & 12
December 14
Phone Terry Oakley 9899 9313

SENIOR TEAMS
Thursdays 10 December
Phone Greg (Secretary) 0416 204 439

WHERE:
REDBANK RESERVE, NORTHMEAD
TIME: 6.30PM

COACHING APPLICATIONS, FAX TO:
9680 9551

Australian News

V-BOMBER DROPS CELTIC BOMBSHELL

By John Economos

Mark Viduka, Australia's 23 year old World Cup striker who only late last week signed a four year contract with giant Scottish club Celtic in an $8 million transfer deal, has sensationally backed out of his agreement and was returning to Melbourne for a rest.

Viduka's shock backdown unleashed an avalanche of hourly headline updates that have rocked the Soccer fraternity right across Britain over the past 72 hours. Mr Bernard Mandic, IMG's Director of Soccer for Australia and Viduka's Commercial manager, stated to ABSW yesterday: "Mark since arriving in Glasgow last week became very wary of the great expectations of him by the Scottish fans and media.

"Once he realised the great scrutiny he'd be under, greater than even what he had back with his previous club in Croatia Zagreb, he realised he didn't want to spend four years at Celtic.

"He had been already under enormous pressure for the past four years while he was at Zagreb," Mr Mandic emphasised.

At a press conference yesterday held by IMG, a statement confirming that Viduka was on his way back to Melbourne was made.

As well, IMG delivered a personal communique from Viduka in which he stated: "It was only when I arrived in Glasgow last week that I started to realise how much I had been affected by events in Zagreb over the last few months, where I had been under enormous pressure.

"I arrived wanting to play, but it became apparent that having thought a change is as good as a rest, I realised I needed a rest.

"It would have been relatively easy for me to cover this up for a few weeks, but that would not have been fair on the Club, the fans or my family. I just hope everyone realises this is not easy for me and appreciates my honesty.

"I realise this is causing great embarrassment and disappointment to the Club, who have been very supportive. I would just ask everyone to be patient while I get back to full strength as quickly as possible," ended Viduka's statement presented to the media in Sydney.

Mark Viduka

Whilst Mr Mandic handles Viduka's commercial affairs, he is not Viduka's 'Player's agent.'

That role is in fact held by IMG's registered FIFA Agent, Mr Claes Elefalk. Mr Mandic could not elaborate any further on Viduka's future till the player arrives back in Melbourne this week.

"Right this moment no decision as to what Mark wants to do in the future has been conveyed to us, or whether in fact he will after resting want to return to Celtic," concluded Mr Mandic.

Meanwhile back in Britain, reports broke out that Celtic's Chairman, Mr Fergus McCann, is now threatening possible litigation against Viduka after the Australian walked out on the Scottish champions without kicking a ball.

Mr McCann has informed the British press that he will be withholding all payment from Croatia Zagreb till this whole matter is cleared up to Celtic's satisfaction.

HOW THEY COURTED VIDUKA

Fergus McCann, Celtic's Managing Director commented just days ago: "I am very pleased that the signing of Mark has been completed — it is a pleasure to welcome him to the Club. The process of bringing Mark Viduka to Celtic has been a long and complicated one but we felt it was important to persevere as Jozef had made it clear that Marko was the number one striking prospect he wanted the Club to sign.

"It has been a long saga, complicated by Zagreb's desire to keep Mark for their Champions League matches, also the fact he is a non-European Union player and hence the requirement for a work permit and by his absence from some international matches through injury.

"We certainly could have had lesser players earlier, but Jozef has shown admirable patience to get his number one choice."

We wonder how they feel now?

Sydney Olympic FC

GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS!

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PRE-BUY 10 TICKETS FOR THE PERTH GLORY MATCH AND BE IN THE DRAW TO WIN SUPPER WITH TWO OF UTS SYDNEY OLYMPIC'S PLAYERS AT THE DAINTREE CAFE LOCATED AT DARLING HARBOUR.

SIMPLY COME TO THE UTS SYDNEY OLYMPIC OFFICE (64 Tennant Parade, Hurlstone Park) AND PURCHASE THE 10 TICKETS AND AT THE PERTH GAME (Sunday December 20 at Belmore Sports Ground) ONE LUCKY GROUP WILL BE DRAWN OUT ON THE DAY.

THIS IS A TERRIFIC OPPORTUNITY, SO DON'T MISS OUT.

FOR MORE DETAILS CONTACT THE UTS SYDNEY OLYMPIC OFFICE ON 9558-5355

DOCTOR PETER MITREVSKI JOINS SOCCER WEEKLY

Soccer Weekly welcomes the well respected Dr Peter Mitrevski as our sports injury specialist. He is experienced at treating sporting injuries and his expertise has seen him as an official chiropractor at many sporting events including the 1993 World Weightlifting Championships, the 1994 Australian Golf Open, the 1995 Police and Fire Games, the 1995 World Triathalon, the 1995 Players' Challenge golf tournament and the 1995 All Africa Games in Zimbabwe.

Dr Mitrevski with Nigeria's Olympic team goalkeeper, Emmanuel Babayaro

Dr Mitrevski has obtained the postgraduate designation of Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician (CCSP) by the American Chiropractic Board of Sports Physicians (ACBSP).

The CCSP degree requires the doctor to attend a one-year postgraduate program.

This instruction is specific to physical fitness and the evaluation and treatment of athletic injuries by enhancing his diagnostic skills and patient care.

The CCSP accreditation exists to provide a uniform standard of education that assures teams and athletes that the doctor has met a minimum level of competency in chiropractic sports medicine.

Dr Mitrevski joins other chiropractors who hold this designation.

He has treated several soccer players, including Socceroos and Ericsson Cup stars.

Over the next few weeks, Soccer Weekly is proud to have Dr Mitrevski giving you his tips and exercises to help treat and prevent injuries.

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"DO YOU WANT TO BE A "REP" SOCCER PLAYER?"

High profile Super League club Canterbury Marrickville Olympic is looking for the next generation of soccer champions aged between 11-16 years of age to join the club's "REPS" in the YOUTH LEAGUE (DIVISION ONE) for 1999.

The Berries are THE ONLY Super League club in the Canterbury-Marrickville area that are in DIVISION ONE and are therefore looking for "REPS" of this District.

Why play elsewhere?

Especially when the Berries have a burning ambition to be a part of the SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE in the year 2000!

So if you are just as serious about giving yourself the best possible opportunity of being identified by State and National selectors, you should attend the following trials ...

December 11th, 14th and 18th

TEMPE RESERVE, TEMPE

(6:00 — 7:30PM)

FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE RING LAKI KONISTIS (SOCCER ADMINISTRATOR): 04111 91815

Australian News

WE MUST RISE TO THE CHALLENGE

By Les Murray

So the real tragedy of that World Cup debacle has finally come home to roost. I refer, of course, to the resurrected tough World Cup path given to Australia for 2002.

Now we're back to 1993 and a monumental hurdle against a top Souh American nation.

With deference to those already frothing at the mouth at FIFA's inhumanity towards us, it is not FIFA's fault, it is our fault.

And it's rooted in that massive screw-up at the MCG against Iran.

From what I know of FIFA's executive, they are not an unsympathetic lot.

Count in president Sepp Blatter who actually wanted a direct qualifier from Oceania but was obviously rolled in last Friday's executive meeting. The reason he was rolled is that Oceania has no track record.

And the region with which the Oceania winner was thrown in last time, Asia, also has an abysmal World Cup record.

In France '98, not one of the four Asian teams managed to advance beyond the first phase. Of 12 matches involving Asian teams, only one had been won, when Iran beat the USA which, in the end, proved to be the bottom team of the 32 nations.

So Asia proved to be by far the weakest continent in the last World Cup. And that's the continent whose fourth best we couldn't beat. So on what do we base our claim that we deserve an easier path and better justice?

The Asians, too, are complaining although it is difficult to understand why. In 2002 they will be guaranteed four places while in France they were only guaranteed three (which is what they would have had had Australia beaten Iran). They are dreadfully lucky two of their nations qualify automatically as hosts.

It is my belief that had Australia beaten Iran, qualified for the World Cup and put up a merely creditable showing, Oceania's credentials would have been recognised and we would have been given an easier path, perhaps even direct qualification through Oceania.

So that is the real tragedy of the MCG experience. And we have only ourselves to blame.

The FIFA decision raises feelings of deja vu. In 1990, when the decision was made to group Oceania with South America, Soccer Australia officials huffed and puffed about FIFA's inhumanity when they should have got on with life and ensured Australia's qualification.

We almost made it but didn't and partly because mistakes were made. Such as agreeing to play the first of the two legs against Argentina at home. Imagine if we played the first game in Buenos Aires and only lost one nil.

Was that FIFA's fault, too?

Soccer Australia should not underestimate the significance of Friday's decision in Zurich and should not dismiss it as merely a case of FIFA injustice.

It should re-group, re-think its plans (if it had any in the first place) and respond right away. World Cup qualification is the singular most serious and crucial mission facing the sport.

It is the only soccer concept to which the entire Australian population can relate. Remember, the next World Cup will be in our time zone, presenting a wonderful opportunity to showcase the Socceroos on the highest stage. The further 1974 fades into the murk of history, the more frustrated and angry Australians will get about our repeated failures to qualify.

Without wishing to enter into debating the specific nuts and bolts of our World Cup plans, Soccer Australia surely now has to bring forward its absurd plan not to appoint a national coach until 2000. The very notion of that is a grubby insult to the millions who believe the World Cup is important.

Let it be said now so that there are no accusations later of speaking with the benefit of hindsight.

The entire Soccer Australia board is accountable for our World Cup effort. If we do not qualify, it will be because of bad planning. In such case the board should collectively resign, as the last board should have done on the night of the Iran game at the MCG.

Let us stop now hiding behind FIFA decisions and notions of injustice.

There will be 32 nations in the finals of 2002 and we should not only be one of them but deserve to be one of them.

Let us get on with the job. And, if we fail, blame only ourselves.

SPIRIT SIGNS MAJOR NEW SPONSOR

By Daniel Giorelando

Northern Spirit have continued in their quest of turning Australian soccer into a fully professional league by signing a major sponsorship deal with telecommunications company G3 communications for the remainder of the 1998/99 season.

The deal was made official on the eve of the Spirit's local derby clash with Sydney United and is a major boost for the club as it attempts to stand on its own two feet.

Remo Nogarotto, Chairman of the Northern Spirit is delighted with the club's new found partnership. "Were pretty ecstatic to secure a sponsor in arguably one of Australia's most competitive industries.

"The only thing missing to date has been the success of a major sponsor which in addition to providing much needed dollars to any club is at the end of the day also about credibility and acceptability in the marketplace.

"This sponsorship is a vote of confidence in what we are doing here", said Nogarotto.

The Northern Spirit along with Perth Glory have taken soccer to a new level through clever marketing and their professional vision.

"There is a need that unless we change and change radically as a game, then the future is bleak", said Nogarotto.

David Watson, Managing Director of G3 communications is delighted to be the major sponsors of the Northern Spirit because of the similarities between the two organisations.

"There are a lot of similarities between the club and the company as such as both are new players in pretty dynamic industries trying to make our way through and I think we will support ourselves really well."

Watson sees the partnership as the company's chance of creating a relationship amongst the soccer community.

"We want to put back a bit into the community and soccer is a good way of doing that because it's a sport that is coming into maturity."

The Spirit who are currently sitting mid table unveiled their new sponsor against Sydney United, where seven ex-United players will line up for the Northern Spirit.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC PLAYERS' REUNION

By John Economos

Sydney Olympic is in the process of organising to honour as a 'Special guest', every single player that has ever played for the team since the club was formed and entered into the National League back in 1977.

Since that time almost 180 players have donned the 'Blue and White' strip of Olympic.

Easily the longest serving player from this large herd of players, has been none other than crowd favourite, goalkeeper Gary ('Bones') Meier.

The special day has been schedule for Olympic's home-match against the League leaders from the west, Perth Glory, at Belmore Oval set down for Sunday December 20th.

When tracked down last night after so many years, former Olympic sweeper Kenny Wilson was excited by the Club's gesture.

"It's fabulous as it will be fantastic to see the old boys again.

"We had some really great times and there was always something going on at Olympic no matter what.

"When I first came to Sydney from Ipswich Town to join Olympic back in 1977, we played our home games at the old Sydney Sportsground which was great.

"We used to get some good crowds back in those days," reminisced Wilson a former Scotland Youth international striker.

On Friday Dec. 18, Sydney Olympic's 'Five White Knights', the majority owners of the team, have also organised a 'Captains' Lunch' to be held at the Centra Motel in Camperdown. At this lunch all former players to have skippered Olympic have been invited.

Some of the prominent names from the past that readily come to mind are Richie Bell, Kenny Wilson, John Kosmina, Grant Lee, David Mitchell, Abbas Saad, David Barrett, Robbie Ironside, Robbie Hooker, Mickey Cross, Derek Lang, Jimmy Patikas, Billy Palmer, Jimmy Zeras, Stuart Markland, Peter Wilson Clint Gosling, Alex Jamieson, David McIntosh, Billy Pirie, Marshall Soper, Ricky Herbert, Vasilios Kalogeracos, Peter Raskopoulos, David Ratcliffe, Terry Patalis, Peter Katholos, Jean Paul De Marigny.

All former Sydney Olympic players are urgently requested to make contact with Olympic's media liason officer David Cooper or commercial manager Tony Rallis during business hours at the Club's offices on 9558-5355 as soon as possible.

Sydney University Soccer Football Club

is proud to announce its promotion to Division 2 of the NSW Soccer Federation and invites all interested players to attend trials and pre-season training starting

Tuesday January 5, 1999

Place:

St John's College Oval, Sydney University

(Entry off Missenden Road)

Time:

6.00pm Tuesday & Thursday

FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT
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OR
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Rob: 0413 702 774
GARY: 9823 6936

SYDNEY OLYMPIC PLAYERS' RE-UNION

The above Club would like to extend a special invitation to all players that have played for Sydney Olympic's first team since the Club was first formed back in 1977.

If you have played for **Olympic's first team** the Club would like to urgently hear from you.

This special invitation is being extended to former Olympic first graders to attend a Players' Reunion that has been scheduled for Sydney Olympic's home match against the Perth Glory at Belmore Oval to be played on December 20, 1998.

Captains' Luncheon December 18

A special luncheon for all former first grade captains of Sydney Olympic has also been arranged and set down for Friday noon, December 18, 1998.

This nostalgic Captains' Luncheon will take place at the Centra Motel (formerly Camperdown Travelodge), situated at Missenden Road, Camperdown.

Former Olympic first grade captains and players are now asked to contact the Clubs' office urgently to make their reservations for both events.

Please contact: **David Cooper** (Media Liaison manager) ... **9558 5355 (B.H.)**
or
Tony Rallis (Commercial manager) ... **9558 5355 (B.H.)**

Australian News

WHAT DO WE WANT?

By the Four Diegos

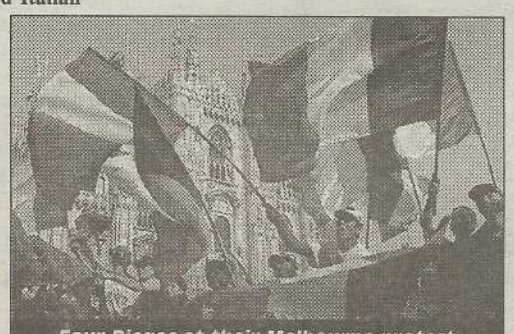
The Four Diegos were there in Italy when the protest vote of hot-blooded Italian males helped elect bare chested model, Cicciolina, into the Italian Parliament.

We were also there when women first burned their bras in the name of women's rights, and of course, we were there when John Lennon and Yoko Ono slept in, kissed and cuddled in the name of love and peace.

In the words of Whitlam, the former Labour Prime Minister not the rockband, 'It's Time' to protest once again.

Channel Seven's paltry coverage of the Ericsson Cup has pricked our collective conscious. We must make it known that acquiring the TV rights to Australian soccer does not give the purchaser the right not to show it.

If you, like The Four Diegos, and many of their influential friends, are not satisfied with Channel Seven's coverage of Aussie soccer, in the words of the famous Mexican singer/songwriter, Billy Joel 'Tell them about it!'



Four Diegos at their Melbourne protest.

Channel Seven's Head Of Sport - Jeff Weil
Ph 02 9877 7777
Fax: 02 9877 7884
Email:
jweil@seven.com.au

Executive Director Of Seven Sport - Shane Wood
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Fax: 02 9967 7900
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swood@seven.com.au

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What do want? Aussie Soccer on TV

When do we want it? Now

What do we want? Aussie Soccer on TV

When do we want it? Now

What do want? Aussie Soccer on TV

When do we want it? Now

DULWICH HILL
SOCCER CLUB

1998 NSW SOCCER FEDERATION 1ST DIVISION TRIALS

1st, U21s, U18s

GENUINE PLAYERS INTERESTED IN PLAYING DIVISION ONE (1) SOCCER ARE INVITED TO ATTEND TRIALS FOR THE DULWICH HILL S.C.

TRIALS WILL BE HELD AT:
TEMPE RESERVE, TEMPE

6.30pm-8.30pm

1st & U21s: Tuesday 15th & Thursday 17th Dec 98
Tuesday 5th & Thursday 7th Jan 99
U18s: Wednesday 16th Dec 98 & 6th Jan 99

ENQUIRIES:
DENNIS DUARTE: 0414 951 635
JERRY ANDRADE: 0412 076 212
DUARTE MARTINS: 0412 392 194

BASER, LOZA MOVING OVERSEAS?

By Dwyght Tuffnell

South Melbourne could lose the services of both Tansel Baser and Goran Lozanovski within the next couple of weeks.

Baser, who is wanted by Turkish first division club, Trabzonspor, seems almost certain to go.

"As far as I know, something was sent off by fax by the club during the week and I think the two clubs have just about come to an agreement" said coach Ange Postecoglou.

Posetcoglou said that the club were expecting to hear from Trabzonspor in the next couple of days.

Baser had trialled with Trabzonspor during the off-season and was all set to go there until the negotiations broke down.

Lozanovski too, could be on his way, to German second division team Arminia Bielefeld.

Lozanovski was on trial with the German club a couple of weeks ago.

"We haven't really got an offer, just an expression of interest" Postecoglou explained.

"They're after a loan at this stage which we're not agreeing to, but if they are interested in him they have to come back to us with a concrete offer and we'll look at it then."

South had Steve Panopoulos back from suspension on Sunday and hope to gain Olyroo defender Con Blatsis back in time for their next home game against Northern Spirit in two weeks' time.

Postecoglou is happy with the way thing are going, despite South not yet reaching some of the form they displayed last season to win the championship.

"We've had all sorts of things go wrong since the start of the season and to be sitting where we are I'm quite comfortable.

"We've yet to come out of a weekend where we've been outplayed.

"We can play a lot better, I've got no doubt about that, but I want us to be playing well at the right time of year" said Postecoglou.

Meanwhile Victorian Premier League side, Port Melbourne Sharks, are going all out to win the title this season.

After some bold predictions last season that they would win the championship, the Sharks started slowly and were knocked out in the elimination final.

For the new campaign — which begins at the end of January — the Sharks have employed the services of Australian soccer legend Alan Davidson as their new coach.

At the club's launch last Wednesday night, Davidson revealed he had turned down many offers, including one from Malaysia, to take up the job at Port Melbourne.

The Sharks, since being promoted in 1994, have been consistent performers in the league without winning the championship.

They made it to the Grand Final in their first season, only to lose to Preston and were knocked out of the finals the following season despite not losing a game during the regular season.

The Sharks have recruited smartly so far bringing in Nick Tsaltas, from Gippsland Falcons and former Collingwood Warriors and Altona Magic defender Dean Fak, both former players at Port.

Also signed is Peter Kakos, who has scored bags of goals in the lower divisions with Oakleigh and Altona East.

Davidson is expecting big things from two players who missed much of last season through injury. Midfielder Alex Efstathiou, once at South Melbourne, and skipper Peter Tsolakis are both tipped by the coach to have a top year.

And Victorian Soccer Federation chairman, Joe Brondolino, will stand up for re-election unopposed at the VSF's annual general meeting tomorrow night.

RYDE CITY
SOCCER CLUB
NSW STATE SUPER LEAGUE

TRIALS

First Grade
Under 21

Tuesday 8 December 7pm
Thursday 10 December 7pm

Meadowbank Park
Bottom of Adelaide St.
West Ryde

Enquiries to Les DeCelis
Ph 0414 999 133 or
(BH) 9799 9133

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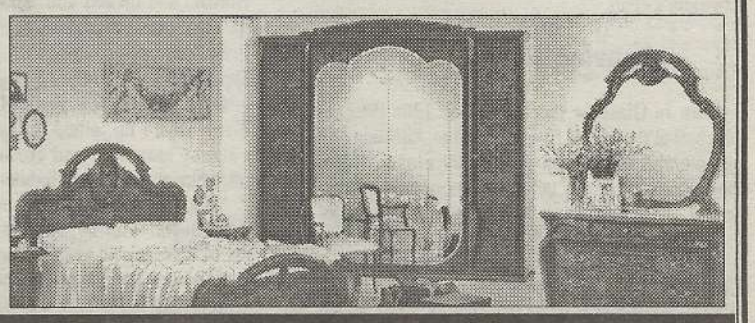

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Australian Features

THE MAN IN BLACK WITH THE GOLDEN TOUCH

One-on-one with John Economos

Saturday October 3rd 1981 was the time. The old Sydney Sportsground was the venue as Australia was about to take on the then current World Champions, Argentina in the opening match of FIFA's World Youth Championships.

To spearhead Australia's attack on this historical afternoon was none other than today's Player-coach of Sydney United, the always phlegmatic, even at the age of 19 ... David Mitchell.

Australia, coached by Les Scheinflug and Raul Blanco was nervous.

The Sydney Sportsground was packed as the young 'Vegemites' ran out from the players' tunnel led by midfield captain, Peter Raskopoulos to do battle with the World Champions.

Wearing the gloves for Australia was Glenn Ahern, the fullbacks were Robert Wheatley and Howard Tredennick with giant, granite stopper being Steve Blair who had behind him as cover, the cultured ball-playing Oscar Crino at sweeper.

Australia's midfield was Grant Lee on the right, Paul Kay, Raskopoulos with Fabio Incantalupo on the left.

Upfront the strapping and lanky Mitchell was paired with the stocky Mark Koussas.

The battle commenced and within minutes Australia had Argentina under severe pressure. The crowd was stunned.

Mitchell totally undaunted by the World Champions ripped into the Argentine defence lines, armed with raw courage plus his immaculate ball control, tearing the Argentinians to shreds.

Australia won a free kick which was quickly taken by Paul Kay. Little Kay swung it high to the back stick, Big Mitch went up, chested it down to Koussas who knocked it into the net.

Shock. Argentina was stung and hit back to level.

The minutes ticked away and with fulltime rapidly approaching, could Australia hang on for a precious point?

But one lanky teenager quietly asked himself — 'Why just one point and not both?', Mitchell questioned.

With less than two minutes left, skipper Raskopoulos swung a long ball into Argentina's box to find Mitchell.

With Argentine defenders clustered around his tall slender frame, the ice-cool Mitchell comfortably controlled it, and in a flash with all the composure in the world, spun around to feed substitute Ian Hunter who slammed into the target.

Australia 2, Argentina 1 at full-time

The stadium was delirious. Hysteria rang around the ground.

The World Champions had been knocked down by the little 'Vegemites' as the then telexes, clattered out of Sydney's media centre the final score, informing all Soccer nations around the planet of Australia's shock, heroic result.

Australia had many heroes that memorable afternoon.

Raskopoulos anchored himself in centre-pitch spraying balls left and right, Adelaide City's Mitchell was ripping Argentina apart upfront, whilst Souths' rock hard Blair majestically stood tall at the back, refusing to take prisoners should anyone dare venture towards his box

For me however, the biggest of a big bunch of heroes for Australia, was 'That Man Mitchell' who had not only ripped Argentina's lines to pieces, but as is still his character of today, unselfishly had engineered both of Australia's goals.

Leaving Adelaide City

Born in Glasgow, Scotland June 13th 1962, David Mitchell at the age of five migrated to Adelaide with his parents and soon, even as a junior player, it became most evident that this tall kid had enormous potential in Soccer.

Adelaide City rapidly drafted Mitch into their ranks.

But almost immedately after the 1981 World Youth Championships, it became clear that the 'Black and Whites' would soon loose their young international star striker.

Sydney Olympic rushed in with a bid, but back in those days Sydney City were the champions and coached by Eddie Thomson.

Sydney City made a counter-bid as Olympic again came back with a stronger offer for Mitchell.

David Mitchell ... Sydney United's player coach.

Thomson knew he must have Mitchell in his strike-line and within two days the furious bidding war between the two Sydney clubs had ended with Mitchell finally seen to wear the Sky-blue and Black of the long-reigning champions, Sydney City.

Following one successful season with the Champions, the quiet Mitch was yearning to try his luck in Britain.

Without any assistance, Mitch who had saved up his pennies bought out his own contract and off he went to join his childhood team, the Glasgow Rangers, for trials.

Within two weeks, the then manager of 'Gers, John Greig, signed the strapping Australian striker up on a two year contract.

Breaking Into Europe

At the end of his contract Mitch ventured across to West Germany where he was snapped up by the struggling Eintracht Frankfurt. Success there again giving the Germans excellent value.

But Mitch wanted to achieve more.

Crack Dutch side Feynoord soon heard of the young Australian's availability and moved in to sign him up on a two year contract.

After one season, England's Bobby Campbell who was touring Europe with Chelsea spotted Mitch in Holland and invited him to join his London club which the ambitious David did.

Success continued with Mitchell gaining many appearances at Stamford Bridge in the first team.

Over the next few years Mitchell moved to Swindon Town where he joined up and played with England's current manager and former player, the magical midfielder, one Glenn Hoddle.

"Hoddle was one of the very best players that I have ever played with in my long career. He had excellent skills, was humble and very unselfish,"Mitchell stated.

"Another top player I've had the pleasure of playing with is Andreas Muller the West German international," Mitchell added.

Towards the end of his senior playing career overseas, Mitchell had heard that Malaysian Soccer was rapidly gaining professionalism and it was no surprise when one of Asia's biggest clubs, Selangor, signed Big Mitch to a year's contract.

Selangor at the time also had another Aussie on its books, none other than super-sweeper Mehmed Durakovic, now also back in Australia and currently playing with Sydney Olympic.

Still today, at Selangor's massive modern Shah Alham Stadium, a huge coloured picture hangs right outside the entrance to the players' dressing rooms, in memory of David Mitchell who had scored the winning goal for Selangor to win the prestigious Malaysian Cup.

Back In Australia

At the end of the Malaysian season in 1996, Mitchell who is married with two young daughters, thought to himself, it was time to come home and settle his children into Australian schools.

Sydney Olympic who had missed initially out in 1981 in signing Mitchell, had not forgotten him and now rapidly rushed in to sign him for the balance of the season as a player, and in fact became care-taker coach with much success over Olympic's last eight matches of the season.

By now Mitchell thought to himself that he would like to try his luck in coaching, having amassed and enormous wealth of knowldge from his European crusades over some 14 years.

Sydney United who had parted company with Branko Culina at the end of the 1996-97 season, moved in an appointed the former Australian International warrior as player-coach.

But Big Mitch was to face an acid test as no less than nine players from United's first team left the club to go overseas or join another NSL side.

Now having left United's dressing rooms were Zeljko Kalac, Robbie Traykovski, Tony Popovic, Mark Babic, Robbie Enes, Ante Moric, Kresimir Marusic, Ante Milicic and David Zdrillic.

The always brave Mitchell now needed his powerful courage more than ever as in the dressing room he was left with only reliable defenders Velimir Kupresak, Joe Vrkic, Richard Plesa, Mark Rudan, midfielder Paul Bilokapic.

Slowly but surely during the off season Mitchell scanned the domestic State Leagues and within 10 weeks had signed up a squad of virtual unknowns, surprisingly welding them into a competitive and efficient unit that saw Sydney United last season do extremely well in the NSL.

Horror upon horror, at the end of last season, it all happened all over again as no less than eight players either retired or were poached by other clubs.

This time Mitchell lost John Perosh, Mark Rudan, Paul Bilokapic, Stuart Munro, Marcus Phillips, Robbie Hooker and Jason Culina.

For the second year running, Mitchell with his trusted assistant Laurie McKinna searched heaven and earth yet again in their arduous task to re-assemble a new squad, this time even on a more stringent budget.

Mission, as expected of him, was again accomplished and today David Mitchell has Sydney United, despite the severity of its double set back, sitting high on the NSL ladder.

Sydney United

Having played no less than 36 full internationals for Australia, scoring 16 precious goals in the process whilst setting up many more, David Mitchell is undaunted about the future.

"You can only do your best despite the hardships confronting you.

"I'm pleased with all my players as they all give me their very best and they all have a very good attitude."

Highlights In David's Career

"There have been a few I'm pleased to say including making my debut for Australia.

"Gaining my first fulltime contract in 1983 with Rangers was another as was winning the Scottish F.A. Cup final in 1984. Winning the pay-offs with Swindon Town at Wembley against Leicester City for promotion was another.

"Having been involved with four Australian World Cup campaigns (1982, 86, 90 and 94, obviously rates highly as well."

"I owe a lot to my wife of 12 years, Adele, who gave up her career in acting to become my wife and travel to Europe with me. She has given me two lovely daughters in Kristy and Jessica.

"I also am fortunate and proud to have Laurie McKinna as my assistant who is loyal and in who I have total trust in. Laurie is an unsung hero and is able to take much of the load off my shoulders especially when I'm on the pitch playing.

"Mike Gibson as well is a huge help in working our goalkeepers and keeping them on their toes," stated Mitchell.

Soccer In Australia Today

"It's amazing really because I see that Australain players do far more than full-time pros in Europe. It's hard for them. here.

"They go to work and then turn up to training for full hard sessions.

"Overseas, fulltime pros do very little in comparison and have much time on their hands.It's relatively easy for them over there.

"As partimers, I believe that Australian players are doing very well indeed," stated Mitchell.

Title Contenders

"I honestly believe that Souths who are the current champions will again challenge strongly but will be hotly pursued all the way by Perth Glory, Marconi and Carlton.

"Here I must add that I also believe that John Kosmina's Brisbane Strikers could be dark horses. They are very competitive and hard to break down.

"Brisbane are well organised and very competitive and have a good formula. I've said before the season kicked off that Brisbane could even make the Top Six.

"As far as my side goes, I believe Walter Ardone was the bargain of the year, whilst my two teenage strikers Mile Sterjovski and Joel Griffiths have great potential.

"Richard Plesa is playing so well that he must be knocking for international selection very soon. Velimir Kupresak as always is doing a fine job whilst hopefully I will have Abbas Saad back by the end of January to join the squad.

"Nathan Day should be back to fitness within the next three weeks or so," ended Australia's former World Cup strike ace.

Australian News

EA SPORTS FIFA 99 GAMES FREE FOR YOU!

It's that time again. We want you to have a wonderful Christmas gift for FREE, ON US! From EA Sports we are pleased to announce the arrival of FIFA 99 CD Rom — a beauty of a game that can be played on your PC using Windows 95 or Windows 98. We have played this in the office during the week and it has been very impressive in terms of its graphics and all-round 'football' entertainment.

It is approved by FIFA and it has tremendous skill in-built. Next week our resident CD Rom game expert Daniel Giorelando will review it, but he has already said that this is the best yet.

You can even slide-tackle and lob the keeper, if you are good enough!

So, if you want one for Christmas, or just want to give one as a present (and we all know these are not cheap in the stores) just send in your envelopes to us and we will pull FOUR WINNERS OUT ON DECEMBER 21, AND SEND THEM STRAIGHT AWAY, JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS.

We will then publish the winners on the Dec 22 Christmas edition of Soccer Weekly.

All you have to do is send in your envelopes to us at the usual address and mark your name, address and phone number on the back.

Address your envelopes to:

SEND ME FIFA 99
FOR CHRISTMAS PLEASE
C/- SOCCER WEEKLY
5-13 GARNERS AVE
MARRICKVILLE 2204

Easy.....

And speaking of promotions, we are also happy to announce that Sydney Olympic is really getting into the promotional swing for their up-coming home game against Perth Glory.

Ladies, you can win a date with Sydney Olympic's players (recently voted the sexiest in the Ericsson Cup by our readers' poll). See ad on page three.

You can also win a fantastic overseas trip courtesy of Thai Airways!!

What's more, there is the Captains' Lunch on the Friday before the game and at the game itself, apart from seeing the league leaders Perth Glory in action, there will be a giant video screen set-up, a celebrity six-a-side game and former Olympic greats plus some special guests.

Well-done Sydney Olympic for trying something different, so why don't you get down to Belmore for what should be a top day of Soccer and entertainment — we will all be there so come and say hello.

And happy birthday to the 'fifth Diego'! Yes that is right, the lovely Carmen Miranda from the Four Diegos had her birthday on Sunday. Best wishes from all here in Sydney.

Also read SW next week for details of our Damian Lovelock Soccer book promotion and our CD promotion for a new Soccer record that has just come out of Adelaide.

Finally, if you want to break into the glamour (!!) world of Soccer journalism, let us know by E-mail, fax or letter. There are vacancies coming up.

NEXT WEEK...
THE FOUR DIEGOS WITH TRACEY HOLMES

"SENSATIONAL STUFF"
- DIEGO MARADONA

"OVER THE TOP"
- ARCHBISHOP GRUMLY

"TOO HOT FOR US"
- COSMO

RACING SOCCER CLUB
NSW FEDERATION DIV 5
Players required training has started ground Whitlam Park No.4
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PAUL FALZON COACH
(9790 4074 AH 019 989 814 BH)
NICOLAS SERRET PRESIDENT
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Keysborough Soccer Club
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SENIOR COACH
for the
1999 season
in the
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For application details, all inquiries to be made to Patrick Tomson on
0414 347 842 (any time)
Closing Date 21/12/98

Leichhardt Tigers Soccer Club
Come and play for the only Super Youth League Club in the inner-west
1999 Cadet Youth Trials
(These teams will be playing in the Soccer NSW Youth League competition – with the prospect of playing in our elite Super Youth League teams. You will also have the opportunity to experience a high level of competitiveness and coaching).
Under 11s & Under 12s
Wednesdays 9th December / 16th December
Fridays 11th December / 18th December
plus corresponding days in January until squads are selected
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Aglie Park
Ramsay St, Haberfield
FOR ALL ENQUIRIES PLEASE PHONE LEICHHARDT TIGERS INFO LINES
9565 2299 (7 lines – 24 hrs) or 0418 493 689 (mobile)

Bonnyrigg White Eagles SOCCER CLUB
WILL BE CONDUCTING
TRIALS
FOR THE 1999 SEASON
CADET YOUTH LEAGUE
Under 11 and 12
at
PLACE:
HOME GROUND, SIMPSON ROAD
BONNYRIGG
DATES AND TIME:
Thursday 10th and 17th December
5.30pm-7.00pm
Saturday 12th and 19th December
9.30am-11.00am
ALL WELCOME
ANY ENQUIRIES PLEASE CALL
THE CLUB'S SECRETARY
JACK CIRJANIC ON:
02 9823-7714

Australian Features

Have Your Say ...

INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL IS OUR NAME

I hate soccer! There, I've said it and I mean it. Not the game (I love the game), just that flaming word!

This contrived and obscure extraction from the British term Assoc(cer)iation Football.

Jerry Seinfeld would undoubtedly ask, "now go figure that out". Those who hate our game have foisted the word upon us. Soccer (wog ball), soccer (hooligan), soccer (riot).

It's hilarious when the Olympics comes around and our Channel 7 commentators have to whisper through gritted teeth "the Football competition".

Now we must concede that yes, there is more than one code of Football here in Australia and each does have its own nickname (Aussie Rules, League, Union and Soccer).

But when each of the other codes wants to show its own professional / promotional face each has no hesitation in calling itself FOOTBALL.

But does our code? No. So what do we call ourselves, we the Australian representatives of the biggest and most popular code of Football in the world? We call ourselves Soccer Australia!

We call our premier competition the Australian National Soccer League.

If our code is to expand beyond its current perceived 'minor sport' status in this country then we must begin by taking back our birthright.

No other code has a greater right to call itself Football. For example just how often does the foot come into play in either Rugby League or Union? The vast majority of the action in both of these codes involves handling of the ball. Even Aussie Rules has become almost equally handball as football.

It is right about now the hand wringing begins with poor excuses like, "well, if we call it the Australian Football League we will be stomped on by the legal eagles of the AFL".

I wonder how the AFL big fish in a small pond would cope with the biggest fish in the biggest ocean FIFA tapping them on the shoulder! At any rate this should not be necessary.

May I humbly suggest a subtle but significant variation when renaming ourselves Football. A variation that will incorporate all the true aspects and realities of what our game is here in this country; that is, a true multicultural mix of all nationalities.

A competition that happily includes teams that originate from the drive of our early migrants (South Melbourne, Adelaide City, Marconi etc.).

But also one that equally incorporates the new wave of truly Australian teams (Carlton, Perth Glory, Brisbane and Northern Spirit). No other football league of any code, anywhere in the world could possibly be as culturally or ethnically diverse as the one we have right here in Australia.

It is truly an Australian International Football League. This name brings together all the elements of what makes our game, different, what makes it great and what makes it completely unique. It is Australian and it is International Football.

Soccer Australia would become the Australian International Football Federation. We would have clubs such as Perth Glory IFC and Marconi Fairfield IFC (International Football Club).

The AFL or either Rugby codes could not object legally or otherwise. The media in time would even fall into line (although admittedly for some it would be a great deal of time!).

This coming at the beginning of the new Millennium would be an enormous psychological boost to our game and to all supporters of our game.

But most importantly we will have re-gained what is rightly and uniquely ours ... our name.

Russell Unitt
(Carlton IFC supporter)

THE KID'S ALRIGHT, SAYS KOSSIE

By Glenn Davis

Coach John Kosmina's philosophy is not whether you're young or old, but whether you're simply good enough.

That criteria is met by Mareeba born 16-year-old Wayne Shroj who's being brought along steadily by the astute Kosmina of the Brisbane Strikers.

Shroj was first spotted by former Strikers midfielder Gary Phillips, now at the helm of the Queensland Academy of Sport, during one of his trips to north Queensland.

After a season under Phillips' guiding hand, Shroj gained promotion to the Strikers this season and won a place in the Australian Under-17 squad earlier in the year.

Shroj, who has just completed Year 11 at Cavendish Road High School, will devote his school holidays training almost daily in a bid to win a permanent starting place with the Strikers.

Shroj admits his inclusion in the Strikers' squad this year came as a surprise.

"I didn't expect to make the Strikers side so soon," he said.

Shroj would love to follow in the same footsteps as Socceroo teammate Kasey Wehrman who played in the Queensland Academy side before breaking into the Strikers under former coach Frank Farina.

In less than two full seasons, Wehrman is now the centre piece of the Strikers midfield, with his attacking flair and skilful touches.

"It's a dream come true but I still have a long way to go," he said.

"I would love to play for Australia at all levels, like Kasey Wehrman."

Kosmina believes Shroj has his feet firmly on the ground and is confident through hard work he'll eventually make the grade.

Shroj had his first taste of national league football in the Strikers 3-2 loss to Melbourne Knights last month, but it won't be his last.

"He'll be in the squad again for our next match against Sydney United at home," Kosmina said.

"He's a very good player with a lot ahead of him.

"He's tough and uses his body well. He's what I'd call a smart player with very good technique."

Meanwhile Kosmina is hoping former Wollongong player Stuart McLaren's clearance from Hong Kong will arrive in time for the Sydney United clash at Suncorp Stadium.

"Stuart passed his fitness test and it looks like we'll probably sign him if we come to terms with him," he said.

McLaren, 23, played his junior football in Rockhampton with teammate Jeromy Harris before moving to the Australian Institute of Sport.

He then spent three seasons at Wollongong under David Ratcliffe, before heading overseas to play with Sterling Albion in the Scottish first division.

McLaren had a brief stint in Hong Kong with first division club Hong Kong Rangers this year before quitting the club after a contractual dispute.

Kosmina is hoping McLaren, who scored nine goals in 18 games with Sterling Albion, will help solve his side's goal scoring problems.

POSITION VACANT AT SOCCER WEEKLY

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GOLD COAST CHAMPIONS CUP

In just two years The Gold Coast Champions Cup has become the largest international youth tournament and cultural exchange in Australia.

This year 75 teams, including five international teams from Samoa, Chinese Taipei and New Zealand and teams from around Australia enjoyed a high quality tournament and fantastic holiday on the Gold Coast Australia's premier international tourist destination.

Open to club and school teams for ages 11 to 18 years the tournament began with a colourful Olympic style opening ceremony. The opening celebrations included the raising of over 40 international, state, city and club flags as well as unforgettable cultural displays from the visiting international teams.

The Gold Coast Mass Pipe band, the Gold Coast Light Horse Brigade and the Gold Coast City Lifeguards led the parade of teams in front of a crowd of around 2,000 enthusiastic supporters.

The arrival of senior and council officials in the care flight helicopter heralded the start of a week of keenly contested games.

As well as playing for magnificent trophies and the title of Gold Coast Champions, all teams in every age group were eligible to win strips designed especially for the Cup by Attack Sportswear.

The Gold Coast City Council has rewarded the convenors of the tournament from host club Mudgeeraba by awarding the Gold Coast Champions Cup special event status alongside the Indy Car Race and The Billabong Surfing Classic.

The Council has gone further by providing The Carrara Sporting Complex as the venue for the 1999 Cup and has invited the 11 international sister cities to the Gold Coast to enter the major youth sporting event.

The securing of the Carrara Sports Complex is a major advancement for the Cup and could see 100 teams participate in the 1999 version.

The Carrara Sports Complex provides an excellent venue and will enable the continuous operation of 10 fields.

It will also provide teams the experience of playing in a major stadium.

Qualified referees are also invited to officiate for part or all of the tournament.

Referees will be paid at Federation rates and assisted in securing accommodation at a rate discounted for the tournament.

Preparation for the 1999 Cup is well advanced with early entries at 30 teams. Clubs and schools are advised to plan early to ensure participation in the 1999 Gold Coast Champions Cup.

For further tournament information including accommodation call Tournament Convenor and Club President Jeff Kemp on phone/fax 07 55304206 or write to Mudgeeraba Soccer Club P.O. Box 1068 Mudgeeraba Qld 4213.

Australian Features

ERICSSON CUP'S DAVID BECKHAM!

Welcome Amigos ! We are The Four Diegos. Let's Samba, Let's Rumba, Let's La Bamba, Let's Salza down the Copacobana with sombreros on our head and ball at our feet.

Let's welcome our first SW guest of the week, Perth Glory's stylish, creative midfielder... Troy Halpin.

***Diegos:* "Many of the Perth Glory female fans like you because of your Robert Redford looks.**

If you were to describe yourself on the field in terms of a film, which one would it be."

(a) 'Indecent Proposal' because you always argue with the referee

(b) 'The Sting' because of your trickery on the ball

(c) 'The Natural' because of your all round game

(d) 'Boogie Nights' (not a Robert Redford film but no doubt a favorite with all the supporters in 'The Shed' at the Perth Oval) because you like performing in public.

Halpin: "That is a good but very weird question. The only time I've ever been called Robert Redford was in a nightclub by a 40-year-old lady whose judgement was seriously clouded because she was slightly under the weather. As far as my performance on the field is concerned, the film that would be describe it best would be 'Indecent Proposal' because I do often have a chat to the referees about some of the treatment I receive at times.

***Diegos:* "Newcastle, your first club, and Perth Glory are worlds apart in terms of match day crowd support. What other differences have you experienced when comparing both clubs?**

Halpin: "The professionalism of both clubs is definitely different. But by far the biggest difference is coming from a crowd of around 4,000 in Newcastle to an average of 17,000-18,000 here in Perth. The Perth Glory club is just a lot larger in terms of everything that we do."

***Diegos:* "You made the step up from domestic soccer to Socceroo selection last year in the two match series against Chile and Japan. Were you happy with your performances and what are your future Socceroo aspirations?**

Halpin: "I was very happy because I went to the tournament not expecting to get much of a run because Terry Venables hadn't seen much of me. I was lucky enough though, to get at least half a game against Chile and things went well for me. The rest of the tournament continued to go well, with the good result against South Korea, a highlight for me. As for my aspirations for the future, I would like to part of the next Aussie World Cup squad. I know whoever is in charge will be looking at overseas based players, but I like to think that some of the home based players will be looked at again just like Ernie Tapai and Paul Trimboli were."

***Diegos:* "Glory at present are on top of the ladder, but your coach Bernd Stange says he is still not happy with the way the team is playing. Do you ever feel like pulling him aside and saying Relax Bernd, we're on top of the ladder, don't worry, let's go have a beer?"**

Halpin: "I think Bernd does come across at times as not being very happy with the way we are playing. Despite this, I think he is fairly relaxed about things at the moment. He likes to play his cards pretty close to his chest and not give too much away. I think potentially, he knows the side is good enough for a top two or three finish but he also knows that we have to perform to our potential every week. This consistency is not there at the moment."

Quotes from The Four Diegos Files

Quote taken from a Four Diegos interview with the frustrated coach of an Ericsson Cup team recently beaten by the Perth Glory.

"I was powerless. I kept feeling like a Hindu snake charmer with a deaf cobra."

And another quote from hopeful coach about to visit the Glory caldron.

"I'm telling all you Perth Glory people — we're going to be exciting. Of course, it was exciting when the Titanic went down."

Australia's David Beckham, Troy Halpin (right) with Carlton's Lubo Lapsansky

***Diegos:* "Against Canberra you scored a cheeky 'David Beckham' type chip from distance. It was a great goal. Was it something that you practised in the back yard as a kid?"**

Halpin: "It probably came from playing in a deep lying midfield role where you play long balls regularly. I guess I've always practised that type of ball. I think in all honesty, it was more of a pass — shot rather than striking it with power. In terms of passing, I have practised strikes like that before. In this case, I just had a go and it went in."

***Diegos:* "The support the team receives in Perth is phenomenal. When the seething Perth Glory throng is behind you, how does it make you feel?"**

Halpin: "For me personally it unbelievable. You see this type of support overseas and you'd never think in your wildest dreams that you would see it here in Australia at club level. Against the Adelaide Sharks the crowd lifted the side and we were able to get away with a 2-1 win. That's the sort of effect they have on the team."

***Diegos:* "Have you got a message for the 'Robert Redford' Glory fans out there in the stands?"**

Halpin: "Aside from asking them to keep hiring out Robert Redford movies at the video store, I'd ask the fans to just keep supporting us. The players this year, are determined to bring home something the crowd certainly deserves, and that is, finals action. We are striving for a home final and we dream of a home Grand final. If the Glory supporters stick by us, we will definitely go very close."

***Diegos:* "Well Troy, you won't see us picking 'Boogie Nights' over one of your movies mate. Keep on scoring those 'David Beckham' goal and I'm sure you'll get a call from Posh Spice. Good luck for the season. Adios amigo."**

Halpin: "Thanks Diegos. My next 'Oscar' is dedicated to you. Ole amigos !"

For the second Four Diegos guest of the week, go to page 18 to meet Australia's future...

AUSSIE MEDIA AND SOCCER: A CONSPIRACY?

By Dwyght Tuffnell

Soccer's coverage by the media has always been a big talking point, even more so it seems this season.

It has always fared poorly, angering fans who love the sport but are being treated nearly as badly as the media treats it.

ABC's match of the day coverage in the first round, was just about the last straw.

There was still five minute to go in the South Melbourne — Gippsland Falcons clash when the ABC cut the coverage to go to a cooking show.

Herald-Sun soccer writer, Peter Desira, has covered the game for 25 years, 18 of them for the Herald-Sun, Australia's highest selling daily newspaper.

"In many ways, the sport get what it deserves" says Desira.

"Newspapers respond to public demand, the sport has got to be bigger to justify a better coverage."

Soccer lags behind many other sports in terms of coverage in the media.

Basketball, Baseball, even Sheffield Shield cricket which would attract about 100 spectators to a day's cricket, get a better run than the world's most popular game.

In a recent edition of the Herald-Sun, a not-so-serious quiz in their entertaiment section asked questions allocating points which went towards working out whether or not you would be suitable to have a film written about your life.

The higher your points score, the more suitable you were.

The question, with three answers to choose from, went as follows.

What is the most dangerous situation you've been in?

1. Attending an Australian soccer match? 10 points
2. Catching the 10.33pm Werribee line train? 5 points
3. A Kamahl concert? 2 points

This is the image many Australians have of soccer, no wonder when all they see of the game are hooligans, riots and anything that is generally wrong with the game.

For example, last season's all-Melbourne Grand Final between South Melbourne and Carlton was making headlines for the entire week afterwards ... for all the wrong reasons.

Somehow, the throwing of flares onto the ground and South's fans running onto the playing arena after the game constituted a 'riot'.

Whilst throwing flares is dangerous and cannot be condoned, the media went right over the top on the fans who came onto the ground.

Save from a few wannabe hooligans hurling flares, the rest of the crowd was well-behaved and the ground invasion was just sheer exhuberance.

In AFL, it is a tradition that spectators do the same thing whenever someone, usually Tony Lockett of Sydney Swans, kicks his hundredth goal of the season

No-one bats an eyelid when this happens but once it occurs at a soccer game, all hell breaks loose.

A couple of weeks ago, the Canberra Cosmos-Melbourne Knights match re-scheduled for Knights Stadium because of developments at Bruce Stadium attracted around only 1,800 fans.

It's not the most attractive fixture in the Ericsson Cup, but there would usually be more people there than that.

Everybody else, well, those who read the Sunday Herald-Sun, believed the game to be still at Bruce Stadium at 6pm.

Despite Soccer Australia giving a good fortnight's notice of the change of venue and time, the Sunday Herald-Sun still ran with the original kick off.

Soccer fans do not deserve this treatment.

Newspaper coverage, in some states, is minimal, but improving says Desira.

"Soccer has got a difficult task getting space, but I've been encouraged by the attitude of clubs and Soccer Australia who are beginning to realise the importance."

It's not only in print though, does soccer get a rough deal.

How many times have you watched the news to see footage of some rioting fans in Europe?

Who wants to see it? Is it so newsworthy that it gets a run on Australian news programs?

It seems as though the mainstream media will kick the game in the guts at every given opportunity.

AFL chief, Wayne Jackson, came out in the press a few months back, saying he was scared of soccer and feared that it may take over from Aussie Rules as the biggest participant sport in Melbourne.

That's already happening in New South Wales and Queensland and although Aussie Rules is still huge in Victoria; things are changing.

Those who knock soccer can't, or don't want to, accept that it is the most popular sport in the world.

The media generally goes along with, and encourages this by projecting negative images of the game all the time.

But things are improving.

Feature writers who knew nothing about soccer and were sent to games to nitpick, are now writing positive articles, most of the time anyway.

ABC's television coverage, offloaded to them by Channel Seven, has brought an indifferent response.

Television covers the game very poorly with highlights and even scores a rarity.

"I'm disappointed by what's happening with television" said Desira. "Especially after being spoilt for years by SBS's dedicated coverage."

ABC don't have a highlights package, instead choosing to show them at half-time during their match of the day broadcast when most people are at other games, denying them the chance to see the other goals.

Channel Seven, which bought the rights for 10 years, shows very little of the game. So much for everything being fine once soccer got on to a commercial station.

SBS did a fantastic job with Australian soccer and, as Desira says, spoilt us with its preview and review programs.

This is why, unless TV coverage isn't near the quality that SBS provided, we're going to be super-critical.

SOCCER WOMAN

WITH JANENE MAR IN CANBERRA

ANSETT AUSTRALIA SUMMER SERIES 1998-99

STATS TELL THE STORY

After four rounds of the season, there have been some intriguing results and stunning individual performances. We take a look at the statistics so far ...

PROGRESSIVE POINTS TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
NSWIS SAPPHIRES	6	4	1	1	12	4	8	13
CANBERRA ECLIPSE	8	3	2	3	16	21	-5	11
SA STANLEY'S STARS	6	2	2	2	11	8	3	8
QAS STING	6	2	1	3	10	16	-6	7
NTHN NSW HORIZON	6	2	-	4	9	9	0	6

Top Goalscorers:
11 Lisa CASAGRANDE (Eclipse)
5 Natalie THOMAS (Stars)
4 Lisa DUNNE (Sting)
3 Kristy PALOZZI (Horizon)
3 Julie MURRAY (Sapphires)

Top Goal Average Player: 1.375 goals per game — LISA CASAGRANDE (11 goals in 8 games)

Hat-tricks:
Lisa CASAGRANDE 5-3 Eclipse v Sting Rnd 1/Sat
Natalie THOMAS 5-1 Stars v Eclipse Rnd 2/Sat
Lisa CASAGRANDE 3-2 Eclipse v Horizon Rnd 3/Sat
Lisa CASAGRANDE 3-2 Eclipse v Sapphires Rnd 4/Sat
Julie MURRAY 4-0 Sapphires v Eclipse Rnd 4/Sun
Lisa DUNNE 3-1 Sting v Horizon Rnd 4/Sun

No.Players To Have Scored:
NSWIS SAPPHIRES 6 players
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON 6
SA STARS 6
CANBERRA ECLIPSE 5
QAS STING 5

Six Points In A Round:
NSWIS SAPPHIRES v Northern NSW Horizon Rnd 2 Home

Goal Average Series: 3.625 goals per game

Goal Average Per Game:
2.0 CANBERRA ECLIPSE
2.0 NSWIS SAPPHIRES
1.83 SA STARS
1.67 QAS STING
1.5 NORTHERN NSW HORIZON

Goals Conceded Per Game:
0.67 NSWIS SAPPHIRES
1.33 SA STARS
1.5 NORTHERN NSW HORIZON
2.63 CANBERRA ECLIPSE
2.67 QAS STING

Biggest Winning Margin:
5-1 SA STARS v Canberra Eclipse *Rnd 2/Sat Home*
4-0 SA STARS v QAS Sting *Rnd 3/Sun - Away*
4-0 NORTHERN NSW HORIZON v QAS Sting *Rnd 4/Sat - Home*
4-0 NSWIS SAPPHIRES v Canberra Eclipse *Rnd 4/Sun - Away*

Single Goal Margins:
1-0 NSWIS SAPPHIRES v Northern NSW Horizon *Rnd 2/Sat - Home*
1-0 NSWIS SAPPHIRES v Northern NSW Horizon *Rnd 2/Sun - Home*
3-2 CANBERRA ECLIPSE v Northern NSW Horizon *Rnd 3/Sat - Home*
2-1 NORTHERN NSW HORIZON v Canberra Eclipse *Rnd 3/Sun - Away*
3-2 CANBERRA ECLIPSE v NSWIS Sapphires *Rnd 4/Sat - Home*

Biggest Total Of Goals In A Game:
5-3 CANBERRA ECLIPSE v QAS Sting *Rnd 1/Sat - Home*

Home Record:
NSWIS SAPPHIRES 2 Wins / 0 Draw / 0 Loss 6 pts 100% Wins
CANBERRA ECLIPSE 3 Wins / 1 Draw / 2 Losses 10 pts 50%
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON 1 Win / 0 Draw / 1 Loss 3 pts 50%
QAS STING 1 Win / 0 Draw / 1 Loss 3 pts 50%
SA STARS 1 Win / 2 Draws / 1 Loss 5 pts 25%

Away Record:
NSWIS SAPPHIRES 2 Wins / 1 Draw / 1 Loss 7 pts 50% Wins
SA STARS 1 Win / 0 Draw / 1 Loss 3 pts 50%
QAS STING 1 Win / 1 Draw / 2 Losses 4 pts 25%
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON 1 Win / 0 Draw / 3 Losses 3 pts 25%
CANBERRA ECLIPSE 0 Win / 1 Draw / 1 Loss 1 pt 0%

Most Clean Sheets:
NSWIS SAPPHIRES with four (3-0, 1-0, 1-0, 4-0)

Turnaround Results Sat/Sun:
Canberra Eclipse v Northern NSW Horizon 3-2, 1-2 *Rnd 3*
QAS Sting v SA Stars 2-0, 0-4 *Rnd 3*
Canberra Eclipse v NSWIS Sapphires 3-2, 0-4 *Rnd 4*
Northern NSW Horizon v QAS Sting 4-0, 1-3 *Rnd 4*

Come From Behind Wins:
CANBERRA ECLIPSE v QAS Sting 5-3 *Rnd 1/Sat*
NORTHERN NSW HORIZON v Canberra Eclipse 2-1 *Rnd 3/Sun*
QAS STING v Northern NSW Horizon 3-1 *Rnd 4/Sun*

Quickfire Pair of Goals Leading To Win:
Natalie THOMAS 58th & 59th mins 5-1 Stars v Eclipse *Rnd 2/Sat*
Shelley YOUMAN 88th, Rachael ALLEY 90th 2-1 Horizon v Eclipse *Rnd 3/Sun*
Erin O'SHEA 15th, Lia MATTO 17th 4-0 Stars v Sting *Rnd 3/Sun*
Lisa CASAGRANDE 46th, 48th 3-2 Eclipse v Sapphires *Rnd 4/Sat*
Kristy PALOZZI 11th, Cheryl SALISBURY 13th 4-0 Horizon v Sting *Rnd 4/Sat*
Lisa DUNNE 63rd, 65th 3-1 Sting v Horizon *Rnd 4/Sun*

Yellow Cards Total: 32

Red Cards Total: 1

After a busy couple of months, we catch up on other news ...

ANSETT AUSTRALIA
Ansett Australia Summer Series
Australian Women's Soccer National League

ARGENTINA AND MEXICO PLAY-OFF

The sixteenth and final World Cup berth will be decided in the coming weeks as Mexico and Argentina battle in a two match play-off.

Runners-up in their respective continental qualifying tournaments, the pair will meet first in Toluca, Mexico on 11 December, before the return clash takes place in Buenos Aires, Argentina on 19 December. The winner will be decided on aggregate goals over the two matches.

Mexico narrowly missed direct qualification, going down by a single goal to Canada in the CONCACAF final. Their campaign has been boosted by the addition of five Mexican-Americans with top college credentials, plus they will introduce a new head coach for the playoffs.

Following their 7-1 loss to favourites Brazil in the South American final, Argentina has also kept busy and has recorded solid wins over Uruguay and Peru.

VALENTINES FIESTA

Valentines Day — 14 February — is the date the sixteen World Cup nations can seriously start planning their campaign as the all-important World Cup Finals Draw goes a long way to deciding each team's destiny.

The Draw will be made in conjunction with the first ever FIFA Women's World All-Star Match at Spartan Stadium in San Jose, California, the ceremony to be conducted during half-time.

The Draw will not only determine each nation's opponents for the preliminary rounds, but also the cities and schedule of travel.

USA (Olympic gold medallists), China (Olympic silver medallists), Norway (World Cup champions 1995) and Germany (World Cup runners-up 1995) have been selected as the top seeds to head the four groups of four.

FIFA criteria will also be applied to each of the remaining twelve nations for further seeding, but who ends up in which group will be up to Lady Luck.

The All-Star Match will feature Olympic champs USA against the FIFA World Stars, a team to be selected by FIFA consisting of at least one player from each of the other fifteen nations.

At least our Draw this time around can't be any worse than our 1995 fate which pitted us against USA, China, and Denmark.

GLADESVILLE HORNSBY KOALAS ENTER STATE LEAGUE

Gladesville Hornsby Women's Soccer Association has successfully applied to join the 1999 Women's State League competition.

After 17 years in existence as an independent body the Association decided to take the plunge and try to create an avenue for local girls to enter the next level of soccer competition without having to leave their local area.

This venture will hopefully continue to produce many representative players whilst they remain under the secure umbrella of the Association.

The G.H.W.S.A. competition is the largest independent women's competition in NSW and last year had over 1300 registered players, 800 of those being under 19 years old.

From this large pool of players the newly formed G.H.W.S. Club will be looking to select 30 players to supply the two teams required to fulfil the criteria set for entry.

So far they have also attracted some young talented players from surrounding areas and are still in search of some experienced. WSL players to bolster the young talent already chosen.

The G.H.W.S.C. have been luck enough to gain the services of a highly qualified coach in Mihai (Michael) Hobineu who has a Level 3 Coaching certificate from his native Romania and a local Level 2. In pre-season trials the local players seem to be warming to his ideas and style.

Their home ground will be at Morrison Bay Park, the sports complex that houses the association competition, recently resurfaced by Ryde Council and with idyllic surrounds, being perched on the shores of newly fashionable Putney and Tennyson.

YOUTH TOUR A GOOD GROUNDING

The Australian Youth Team completed a most successful tour to The Netherlands 23 October to 2 November after three days' preparation at the AIS in Canberra.

On arrival, the Aussies discovered that all the members of The Netherlands Youth Team had been identified at the age of twelve or thirteen and been in the Dutch elite system ever since, brought together into camp every four months.

This was their last hitout before competing in the European Youth Qualifiers, and included in the Dutch team were two senior National Team players.

National Assistant Coach and National Youth Coach Chris Tanzey was therefore delighted when the Australians were more than a match for the Dutch when they met in two internationals.

"It could have been a lot more difficult than it was," said Tanzey. "It's a credit to the girls that we were able to be so competitive. It just goes to show what we could have done with more preparation. I certainly think it was an outstanding tour from all aspects."

Australia drew 1-1 in the first international and missed a penalty late in the game. However, Australia's best performance for the tour was in the second test, a match which ended in a 3-1 loss.

"I was very proud of that display — the scoreline didn't do us justice. We made a lot of chances, but were punished as the Dutch scored from all of their three chances. It was the fact that we got so close. In a lot of departments we were better, just the finishing let us down."

Tanzey added, "Results are not the point of youth development. Even if we'd won all our games, there's no point if you don't get players knocking on the door for the National Team."

"The experienced gained both on and off the park is invaluable, and will make it easier for players to make the step up, learning the philosophy of how the senior team operates. We gained a lot of respect too whilst in Holland. They thought they'd give us a flogging, and when they found out we'd been together just three days, it opened a few eyes."

26 October
Match versus Zwart-Wit 28 was washed out.

28 October
AUSTRALIAN YOUTH 7 (Bond 5, 60, Baker 10, Clarke 42, Golebiowski 45, 65, Small 55) defeated WIT-ROOD-WIT 0

30 October
AUSTRALIAN YOUTH 1 (own goal 65) drew with THE NETHERLANDS YOUTH 1 (42)

1 November
THE NETHERLANDS YOUTH 3 (40, 45, 67) defeated AUSTRALIAN YOUTH 1 (Baker 20)

Australian Youth Team: Rachael Alley, Tracy Baker, Louisa Bisby, Megan Bond, Joanne Butland, Danielle Clarke, Kelly Golebiowski, Jessica Halfpenny, Peita-Claire Hepperlin, Tal Karp, Cassandra Kell, Kate McShea, Kimberley Morris, Amanda Parker, Danielle Small, Amy Wilson.

COMING SOON

The Matildas are soon to take on World Cup teams Italy and Canada next month. Stay tuned for all the details on the inaugural Australia Cup. It's pressure time all round with the new intake of AIS scholarships to be announced shortly.

SUMMER IS... ERICSSON CUP

RESULTS ROUND 9

Adelaide Sharks	1
Carlton	1
Newcastle Breakers	3
Perth Glory	2
South Melbourne	3
Wollongong	1
Marconi	2
Sydney Olympic	1
Sydney United	1
Northern Spirit	0
Melbourne Knights	1
Gippsland Falcons	0

Canberra v Adelaide City
Played Monday night (Dec 7)

next round

Saturday 12 December
Brisbane Strikers v Sydney United
Suncorp Stadium
Sunday 13 December
Melbourne Knights v Adelaide Sharks
Knights Stadium
Perth Glory v Marconi Fairfield
Perth Oval
Wollongong Wolves v Gippsland Falcons
Brandon Park
Adelaide City v South Melbourne
Hindmarsh Stadium
Carlton v Newcastle Breakers
Optus Oval
Monday 14 December
Canberra Cosmos v Northern Spirit
Bruce Stadium
Bye: Sydney Olympic

Please note, these fixtures are supplied by Soccer Australia, and are correct at time of printing. Please check local guides in case of changes. We accept no responsibility for any late changes to fixtures, or incorrect information supplied to us.

TABLE

	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Perth Glory	7	1	1	22	9	22
Marconi	6	1	1	22	9	22
Sth Melbourne	5	2	2	20	15	17
Sydney Utd	5	1	3	14	12	16
Carlton	4	2	3	21	11	14
Adelaide City	4	1	2	11	8	13
Sydney Olympic	4	1	4	15	15	13
Adelaide Sharks	3	2	3	13	12	11
Northern Spirit	3	1	4	6	10	10
Brisbane	2	3	3	11	12	9
Melb Knights	3	-	5	8	11	9
Wollongong	2	2	4	10	15	8
Gippsland	2	2	4	4	10	8
Newcastle	2	1	5	10	15	7
Canberra	-	-	8	6	26	0

ERICSSON CUP

ERICSSON CUP

ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 9
4-7 DECEMBER
1998

MUNRO FUMES AS HARRY STRIKES AGAIN

GIPPSLAND FALCONS 0
MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 1
Harry Karl 61
At Mobil Park, Gippsland

By Damian Tripodi

A luckless Gippsland Falcons went down by the barest of margins to Victorian rival Melbourne Kinghts in a game that the home side was widely tipped to win.

The Gippslanders created enough chances, however, as in previous weeks, the final path towards goal was elusive. The midfielders were largely unable to feed the forwards, who also squandered several precious chances.

Whilst the Falcons were very competitive and should at least have come away with one point, the sad fact is that the loss is the Falcons' third in succession and furthermore, it marks the fifth consecutive game without scoring a goal.

The Knights took the lead in the 61st minute with a soft goal when striker Harry Karl took advantage of a Gippsland defensive error to tap the ball into the net. The goal was particularly special for the visitors, as they also have been struggling to find the net in recent weeks.

The Falcons, in a spasmodic performance, almost equalised minutes before the final whistle when Will Hastie cleverly laid a ball to his captain Jeff Hopkins, whose shot from the edge of the 18 yard box forced the Knights keeper Joey Didulica to make a spectacular diving save.

Technically the game never reached a high standard, though it was an entertaining event, mostly played in midfield.

The Falcons began brilliantly, showing class, putting the visitors under pressure for about the first 15 minutes. They were moving forward in numbers and looked dangerous.

Bryan MacNicol, playing a wide role was the main supply of balls from the right whilst resilient youngster John Hutchinson was controlling the left flank.

Stuart Munro

But, inexplicably, as the clock ticked, the team appeared to lose the noted discipline and coordination which had shattered opponents early in the season, thus allowing the Knights to get into the game.

Harry Karl

An understandebly disappointed Gippsland coach Stuart Munro, described his team's performance as the worst this season.

"Everything I've told them went out of the window", stated Munro. "The first half was totally unacceptable. The midfield was not working and the strikers were not doing their job. They let me down, let themselves down and most importantly let the supporters down".

The Knights came out with a new burst of energy in the second half with former Falcon Michael Reda providing good service up front and with Tom Pondeljak, Zeljko Susa and defender Ransford Banini putting in solid workmanlike performances.

The Gippslanders had some shining lights of their own. Captain Jeff Hopkins put in a great display. Manny Gotis was solid in defence and Archie Thompson, who returned after a week's lay off, despite being heavily marked, showed patches of his brilliance.

Knights' coach, Vid Horvat was happy with his team's performance. "We have been playing better every week", stated Horvat." Even last week against South Melbourne we had the better opportunities but not the luck".

Horvat added, "I have to confess that I was uneasy about coming to Gippsland because they are a difficult team to beat at home. We have the utmost respect for them as they beat us 3-0 in a pre-season match".

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: Approx 2,500

Referee: J Blaney

Gippsland Falcons: Jevdjevic, Anderson, Gotis, Hopkins, MacNicol, Thompson, Hutchinson (Canosa 76), Perinovic (Di Iorio 76), Vargas (Savage 65), Puca, Hastie.

Melbourne Knights: Didulica, Kovacevic, Banini, Vukadin, Jolic, Sevin, Reda, Pondeljak (Cutlesovski 90), Susa, Kelic (Nastevski 63), Karl (Deak 76).

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Karl (Melbourne Knights)
2: Hopkins (Gippsland Falcons)
1: Reda (Melbourne Knights)

EARLY BLITZ BLOWS WOLVES AWAY

SOUTH MELBOURNE 3
Coveny 7, Curcija 14, Clarkson 85
WOLLONGONG WOLVES 1
Reid 24
At Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne

By Dwyght Tuffnell

A blistering opening 15 minutes set champions South Melbourne up for a 3-1 win over Wollongong Wolves on Sunday.

South were 2-0 up inside the first quarter of an hour but were pulled back by a spirited Wolves side.

The visitors settled down after the early onslaught and had opportunities to level the score before a David Clarkson rocket sealed the points for South five minutes from full time.

South coach Ange Postecoglou acknowledged whilst the team isn't playing at its full capability, it's still important to keep winning.

"It's the first time this season we've got two wins on the trot" he said. "It's important for us to get on a run of wins. Perth lost this weekend so that gave us the opportunity to bridge the gap.

"If we're going to make an impression on the top two, we've got to start winning games in a row and to do that you'll have scrappy wins and good performances, the important thing is to keep picking up the three points."

South prised open the Wolves backline with far too much ease for the first goal, coming after seven minutes.

Paul Trimboli spotted Vaughan Coveny totally unmarked at the far post and although Wolves 'keeper Leslie Pogliacomi held his header, he had already carried it over the line.

When they scored again in the 14th minute, the game was in danger of turning into a rout.

Goran Lozanovski's corner landed nicely on the head of Michael Curcija and his downward header bounced in off the crossbar.

Wollongong weathered the storm and pulled one goal back in the 24th minute.

Alvin Ceccoli's centre was half-cleared out to Paul Reid who, from 20 metres, fired a low shot beyond the reach of Michael Petkovic.

The Wolves then applied pressure of their own and, on a few occasions, were in scoring positions, but getting a shot at goal was beyond them.

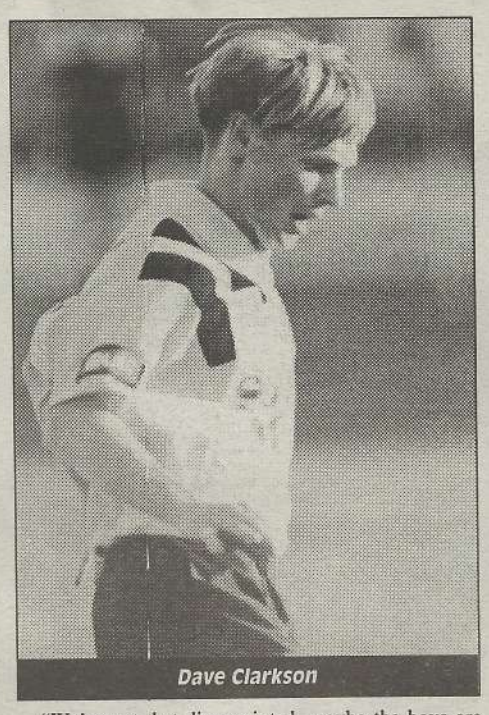
It was the same story for most of the second half, the Wolves, still definitely in the game, let down by goal-shyness.

This was best illustrated in the 71st minute when Chipperfield, after being found by Esala Masi, elected to cross to Saso Petrovski, instead of shooting when he had a clear shot at Petkovic's goal.

Clarkson, whose hard work in midfield have made him the stand out player for many of South's games this season, ended any hopes the Wolves had of grabbing a point.

Substitute John Anastasiadis held up the ball well before laying it off in front of Clarkson to run onto it and smash a shot from 25 metres that was too hot to handle for Pogliacomi.

Wolves supremo Nick Theodorakopoulos was pleased with the performance of his side but did say that they perhaps should have taken the some of the chances they had.


Dave Clarkson

"We're not that disappointed, maybe the boys are because they felt they could have perhaps pinched a draw, which would have been a very good result for us.

"South had two half-chances and they capitalised on them. We had a few half-chances during the first half, especially Scott Chipperfield. What was disappointing is that he didn't even get a shot on at goal let alone a shot on target.

"We certainly applied a bit of pressure on them. One of the reasons South Melbourne weren't their usual fluent selves is that we didn't allow them to be.

"I think our boys should get some credit, they certainly mactlied it with them after the first fifteen minutes" concluded Theodorakopoulos.

Postecoglou echoed similar sentiments.

"We seemed to be in a bit of a rut but you've got to give them (Wollongong) credit. They certainly worked hard and made it hard for us.

"The first 20-25 minutes was good, we played really well and put them under pressure and probably won the game in that period getting the two goal lead.

Postecoglou said the team isn't playing as well as it can, pointing out that every side tends to lift a notch when they play against them.

"After the first 20 minutes, the whole team struggled for the majority of the game.

"That's part and parcel of being the champions of Australia. Teams come here and make it hard for us but we're learning to come to terms with that" ended Postecoglou.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: Approx. 5,000

Referee: M Shield

South Melbourne: Petkovic, Iosifidis, De Amicis, Orlic, Clarkson, Panopoulos (Polak 72), Coveny, Trimboli (Tsekinis 86), Curcija (Anastasiadis 61), Baser, Lozanvski.

Wollongong Wolves: Pogliacomi, Souris, Ceccoli, Sinozic, Horsley, Chipperfield (Surjan 72), Petrovski, Huxley (Dimoski 60), Langan, Masi (Brooks 80), Reid.

Yellows
South Melbourne: Orlic 10, Curcija 59
Wollongong Wolves : Huxley 11, Masi 33, Souris 48, Petrovski 79.

Votes for Player of the Year:
3: Clarkson (South Melbourne)
2: Coveny (South Melbourne)
1: Reid (Wollongong Wolves)

ERICSSON CUP

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CULINA LIVID AFTER DYNAMIC DERBY

MARCONI FAIRFIELD 2
Awaritefe 57, Maloney 73
SYDNEY OLYMPIC 1
Culina 37
At Marconi Stadium, Sydney

By John Economos

Marconi had to tenaciously defend in the last 10 minutes of an action-packed, and sometimes torrid, match to hold out a rejuvenated Sydney Olympic before running out 2-1 winners last Sunday night at the Marconi Stadium.

Despite Olympic having hit the lead in the first half, Marconi bounced back with two second half goals to leapfrog into the lead, but had to battle hard to preserve their advantage, as for the very first time this season Olympic fiercely competed to the very last second of this full of action duel.

Both teams now play with a flat-four, a luxury Olympic most certainly could ill-afford prior to the arrival of their star international defender Mehmed Durakovic.

In the third minute Marconi hit the right post through Brad Maloney but two minutes later lost mobile striker Sean Babic who left the field with ligament damage to be replaced by the energetic Kris Trajanovski.

A violent piece of play by a Marconi defender 18 minutes from the break saw Olympic's teenaged playmaker Jason Culina reel back clutching his mouth from which blood flowed. Groggily Culina stumbled to the sideline asking his father, and Olympic's coach, Branko, permission to come off and be substituted as his jaw was out of line and some of his teeth had been loosened by the vicious challenge.

Most strangely however, Olympic's coach flatly rejected his son's request, despite seeing from close-range his offspring's injury and heartlessly commanded his son to get straight back onto the playing pitch. On the Club's doctor's halftime advice and insistence however, the injured player was ultimately replaced by Chris Kalantzis.

No less than five minutes after this most strange scenario, little Jason ironically, if not somewhat heroically, himself drew first blood against Marconi by scoring a wonderful goal to lift Olympic into the lead. Latching onto a cross from the left by striker Carlos Gonzalez, Culina displayed silky control to advance into the box, and with excellent composure calmly slotted his shot just inside the right upright.

In the players' tunnel at halftime, a tussle flared up between Marconi's Francis Awaritefe and Olympic's Brett Emerton, forcing referee Brett Hugo to call both players into his change room to chastise them.

Twelve minutes after the break Marconi equalised through Francis Awaritefe. Midfielder Vlado Zoric laid the ball back out wide to defender Mike Smith who crossed back into the box for the alert Awaritefe to volley-tap into the target.

In the 73rd minute Marconi hit the front, again through the engineering skills of Zoric. Stealing possession from Olympic's flankman Brett Emerton, Zoric steamed up centre-field before spraying a pass wide to his left to find striker Kris Trajanovski. A perfect flat cross into the box found Marconi's captain and top goalscorer Brad Maloney racing in from the back stick to solidly place his shot deep into the target for his sixth goal of the season.

Despite the loss, this was easily Olympic's best performance so far this season, refusing to yield to their more illustrious opponents and in fact three times came close in pulling the match out of the fire in the dying minutes.

Halftime substitute Kalantzis in the 76th minute smacked his 25 metre dipping free-kick well on target, be was denied joy by NSL debutant goalkeeper David

Francis Awaritefe

Aceski who palmed up onto his cross-bar. Then Olympic's other substitute Scott Baillie had his close-ranged drive cleared off the line by defender Buddy Farrah.

Marconi's good fortune continued in the last two minutes as they could have conceded a penalty plus a red card when first, striker Pablo Cardozo was fouled well inside the box, then Olympic's captain Peter Tsekenis who was free, again inside the box, was shirt-pulled off the ball by the same Marconi defender who already had previously been issued with a yellow card.

In the 89th minute central defender Mark Babic made a life-saving tackle six metres out to dispossess the raiding Leo Carle well inside the box when a certain equalising goal for Olympic looked possible.

Marconi's coach Frank Farina commented: "I was pleased with all the boys who came on and played well, and I was especially pleased by the way we performed in the second half."

But a still furious Olympic coach Branko Culina, made a very hostile outburst straight after the match, stating:

"My boys deserved much better out there, and why wasn't that Marconi defender sent off for that foul inside the box when he already had been cautioned? They (Marconi) got the breaks and all the assistance you could wish for.

"Marconi is a very good team, but tonight they certainly had the advantage of all the decisions, and I only wish that I could coach Marconi and get all those breaks."

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 7,121

Referee: B. Hugo

Marconi: Aceski: Gibson: M. Babic, Longo, Smith (Care 65), Phillips (Farrah 60), McDonald, Maloney, Zoric, S. Babic (Trajanovski 5), Awaritefe.

Sydney Olympic: Bouhoutsos, Thomas, Juric, Durakovic, Brennan, Emerton, Culina (Kalantzis 46), Tsekenis, Augerinos (Baillie 80), Cardozo, Gonzalez (L.Carle 80).

Votes for Player of the Year:

3: Awaritefe (Marconi)
2: Zoric (Marconi)
1: Brennan (SO)

GLORY DAYS AT NEWCASTLE

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 3
Shannon 54, Owens 76 and 92
At Breakers Stadium, Newcastle
PERTH GLORY 2
Despotovski 9, Markovski 77

By John Economos

Newcastle Breakers last Friday night courageously achieved what no other club in the NSL has been able to do so far this season. The gallant young Novocastrians in a sensational match inflicted a shock 3-2 defeat on previously undefeated league leaders Perth Glory at the Breakers Stadium.

Whilst 17 year old late substitute Greg Owens took line-honours by scoring Newcastle's last two goals, both long-range volleys, it was in fact a herculean team-effort that ultimately sent the stunned Western Australians crashing to their first defeat of the season.

Ironically it was Perth that drew first blood when a Troy Halpin free kick from the line found striker Bobby Despotovski score with a free header.

The young, lowly placed Newcastle side who had previously notched just a single win from their last seven outings, refused to yield and exploded with power to pin down Perth in their own half for most of the first innings.

Nine minutes into the second session Newcastle sustained fury ultimately buckled Glory's defences as South Korean striker Sang-Chul Yoon from the left shook off two defenders to chip a lovely ball to the back stick for Scottish midfielder Robbie Shannon to easily slam into the target.

The Breaker Stadium crowd went beserk in the 76th minute as Newcastle for the first time hit the lead. A sensational and sweetly strucked 25 metre volley by substitute Owens, crashed into the net, giving former Australian international goalkeeper Anthony Franken no chance whatsoever.

Bobby Despotovski

But the Novocastrians' joy was abruptly halted just 30 seconds later as Perth's giant marksman, John Markovski scored. Playing his 300th match in the NSL, Markovski headed over goalkeeper Bobby Catlin a quickly taken Halpin free kick to nail his 99th goal in the NSW and thus restore the scoreboard's equilibrium.

Breaker coach Sterrey engineered Shannon to repeatedly raid down the right line whilst using highly mobile striker Johnny Buonavogli wide out on the left to pierce his defender and stretch Perth to create a central corridor for twin midfielders Mark Wilson and Peter Ritchie to funnel forward in support.

The elastic Franken was forced to make three desperate saves from shots fired in and on target by Wilson, Buonavoglia and Yoon, but three minutes into stoppage time Franken was left helpless to prevent yet another stunning Owens 'bomb' from crashing into Perth's net.

A midfield tussie saw Newcastle's industrious 'screener' Andy Roberts battle with his skipper and sweeper Shane Pryce, who spilled the ball to the lurking, Owens.

The youngest player on the pitch exploded a rocketing 30 metre volley that screamed into the top left corner of the target, igniting for the second time the entire Breakers Stadium and simultaneously locking up all three league points for Newcastle.

Robert Shannon

Outstanding for Newcastle were centre-back Todd McManus, Shannon, Owens, Roberts, Wilson and Yoon, whilst Perth's best were Franken and Despotovski.

The always enthusiastic Newcastle rookie coach Sterrey battled to contain his emotions as he later elaborated, "we should have had another two or three goals. We were denied a couple, if not three penalties, which I don't fully blame the referee for entirely, but his linesmen, who are in fact there to assist him.

"Johnny Buonavoglia, Fouad Umlil and Yoon were either chopped or pulled down. We have shown courage and character in the past but never for the entire 90 minutes as we did tonight.

"They (Perth) couldn't move in the first half and Pryce, Shannon and McManus led the battle in very fine style.

"Either one of Greg's (Owen's) goals surely must go close to being selected as 'Goal of the Year'. They were sensational. Newcastle tonight was just fantastic," ended the by now horse Sterrey.

MATCH STATS...

Crowd: 3,637

Referee: Greg Leverton

Newcastle Breakers: Catlin, Shannon, McManus, Pryce, Sprod (Wieczorek 70), Wilson, Roberts, Ritchie (Owens 74), Yoon, Umlil (Maguire 85), Buonavoglia.

Perth Glory: Franken, Garcia, Wilkinson, Hay, Hamwell, Miller, Strudwick (off 70 Boutsianis on), (Carbone 15), Haven, Halpin, Despotovski (Kalogeracos 90), Markovski.

Votes for Player of the Year:
3: McManus (Newcastle)
2: Shannon (Newcastle)
1: Owens (Newcastle)

ERICSSON CUP

WEEK 9
4-7 DECEMBER
1998

CARLTON TAKES BITE OUT OF SHARKS

ADELAIDE SHARKS 1
Thorp 17
CARLTON 1
Markovac 9
At Hindmarsh Stadium, Adelaide

By Margaret Bowden and Donald Campbell

Despite both sides missing top quality players — David Miller, Alex Kuzmanovic, Frank Tibaldi (injured) for the Sharks, Dino Anastasiadis (trialing with Dundee United), Andrew Marth (suspended) and Simon Colosimo (injured) for Carlton — coaches Manfred Schaeffer and Eddie Krncevic appeared quietly confident before the game.

Attack from the kick off was both teams' approach. In the second minute, Carlton's Alex Moreira sent a high inswinging shot goalward from 25 metres on the right, forcing Wildy into a back peddling high save.

At the other end, Blues' keeper Cagalj had an early wake up call in the 3rd minute when Anthopoulos rocketed a pass back to him. Under no pressure, Cagalj took his eye off the ball, casually stuck his right foot out to trap it, and almost sent it into his own net. This was the signal for the Sharks to attack through Milosevic and Thorp in the centre, Castro on the right and Duric on left. Milosevic fired in several long range shots, but all went flying past the far post or over the crossbar. Just as it looked as if the Sharks would score, the Blues turned the tables.

John Gibson blatantly pushed Lubo Lapsansky in the back about 35 metres from goal on the right. Lapsansky lofted his free kick into the penalty area, Kokkinoplitis skied the ball, Wildy came off his line to catch it, fumbled as three other players also jumped for the ball, and it fell for Markovac to slam into the open goal from ten metres in the 9th minute - 1-0 Carlton.

From then on, possession went in patches, each side dominating for five minute periods. Andy Vlahos, Lapsansky, Marco Bresciano, Con Anthopoulos and Moreira combined perfectly in attack for Carlton, forcing corners and firing in shots, but Alex Castro, Paul Pezos, Paul Souris and Con Kokkinoplitis held firm in defence for the Sharks, while Nathan Wildy had his mind firmly set on becoming the Sharks' number one keeper.

Richie Alagich and Branko Milosevic were the Sharks' driving forces in midfield, combining with Gibson, Souris, Pezos and Castro to set up 'Big Hammy' Thorp, Derek Poimer and Alex Duric time and time again. Marcus Stergiopoulos Coast fm radio's man of the match, time and again repelled these Shark attacks with timely tackles, counter-attacking by sending Bresciano racing upfield on the end of pinpoint passes. Many of these moves broke down with the final pass to Moreira, however, who was continually caught offside.

Despite his brilliance, Stergiopoulos couldn't prevent the Sharks from scoring in the17th minute. Duric gathered the ball in midfield and sent Pezos away down the left wing in a classic overlapping fullback move.

Pezos ran the ball to the bye line and cut it back to Poimer running into the penalty area. As Cagalj raced off his line to block the anticipated shot, Poimer crossed to Thorp running through on his right to clatter the ball into the net from four metres - 1-1.

Five minutes later Thorp missed a sitter from six yards. Poimer then missed two close range shots in succession, while at the other end Lapsansky was causing all sorts of problems. Gibson earned the dubious honour of being the only player to go into referee Breeze's little black book for a reckless tackle on the speedster.

The final six minutes of the first half was all Sharks, with Duric, Gibson and Castro missing what should have been certain goals, and Cagalj forced into a spectacular diving save to deflect a low Thorp shot onto the left hand post.

The second half saw Carlton brilliant on the counter attack after the Sharks dominated the first ten minutes.

Gibson looked certain to get on the score sheet in the 53rd minute when he finished a dodging thirty metre run down the right with a shot on target from eight metres.

The fans jumped up in anticipation, but in flashed Stergiopoulos from the left to clear off the goal line. Gibson was denied again in the 73rd minute when he steamed in from the left and smashed a shot on target with Cagalj beaten, only to see Stergiopoulos pop up again on the goal line to flick the ball clear with his head.

MATCH STATS ...

Crowd: 3,200

Referee: Matthew Breeze

Assistant referees: Craig Zetter, Matthew Cream

Adelaide Sharks: Wildy, Alagich, Castro, Souris, Kokkinoplitis, Milosevic (Artone 59), Thorp (Porter 70), Poimer, Duric, Pezos (Vidakovic 80), Gibson.

Carlton: Cagalj, Anthopoulos, Stergiopoulos, Douglas, Bresciano, Moreira (Josifovski 53), Lapsansky, Vlahos, Tricarico, Cervinski, Markovac.

Yellow: Sharks
Gibson (28)

Votes for player of the year
3 Stergiopoulos (Carlton)
2 Alagich (Sharks)
1 Wildy (Sharks)

STERJOVSKI SINKS SPIRIT

SYDNEY UNITED 1
Sterjovski 39
NORTHERN SPIRIT 0
At Edensor Park, Sydney

By John Vrtaric

Northern Spirit continued its depressing goal drought as David Mitchell conjured up more coaching magic as his rebuilt Sydney United team ventured towards the top of the Ericsson Cup with a 1-0 win at Edensor Park.

On a warm Sunday afternoon Spirit featured in local Sydney derby for the first time when it made the long haul from its affluent northern suburbs to the outer western suburbs home of United.

The game was the first opportunity to see how many of Spirit's large support base would take to the road with their heroes. Expectation were set for a crowd of close to 10,000 but the Spirit brought with them only a few thousand core supporters to make up a total of just over six thousand.

United's simple but effective style proved too much for a disjointed Spirit team that lacked midfield creativity to set up chances for its non performing strike force. Spirit's strike force has scored only one goal this season with Daniel Watkins' scorcher of a few weeks ago the only bright note.

Neither Clayton Zane nor coach, Graham Arnold had opened their accounts for the season and this match, again, proved fruitless for both.

United's most consistent player, Walter Ardone, was the first to test the goal keepers when his rasping twenty five metre shot was turned away for a corner by Paul Henderson.

In the eighth minute Spirit created one of its few good moves. A combination between Phil Moss and Kresimir Marusic allowed the young wing back, Langdon to run onto a through ball and produce an excellent cross that United's sweeper, Richard Plesa, just got his head to the ball preventing Zane from attempting a header on goal.

Spirit's square defence had trouble coping with United's long ball out of defence in the 20th minute Velimir Kupresak's quickly taken free kick over the top of the Spirit back line fell into the path of Steve Berry just inside the penalty area. The ball bounced perfectly for Berry who had plenty of time to place his shot beyond the advancing Henderson but his lob sailed harmlessly over the goal.

Four minutes later United were somewhat fortunate when Watkins picked up a loose ball deep in United's half and released it to Marusic who was in the clear and heading towards Crews when the referee blew his whistle for offside.

Henderson was, again, exhibiting his aerial vulnerability when, in the 26th minute, Joe Caleta escaped the clutches of Mark Rudan to send over a cross into the Spirit goal mouth. Henderson's diving attempt almost knocked the ball into the path of Mile Sterjovski but Moss was first to the ball and cleared it to safety.

Another long ball by, again, Kupresak, produced the only goal of the game in the 39th minute.

Kupresak received the ball deep into his own half and as the Spirit defence was playing for offside Berry broke quickly from United's midfield and found himself in the clear with Kupresak's perfectly flighted clearance.

Berry pushed the ball into the penalty area and crossed it along the turf past the outstretched arm of Henderson and onto the foot of Sterjovski to shoot into the net for a 1-0 lead.

A minute later a pass from Zane wide to Langdon saw the wing back hit another good cross, this time beyond the far post. A lurking Marusic found the ball falling perfectly for him to volley towards the goal but, unfortunately, straight into the bodies of a crowded penalty area.

In the last minute of the half an excellent ball from Ardone to Berry resulted in Berry falling to the turf after a clash with Moss but the referee saw no illegal play and waved play to continue.

The fourth minute of the second half produced a half chance for the Spirit from a corner on the right by Marusic. The corner saw Paul Bilokapic reach the ball first but the goal bound header was cleared of the goal line by Jacob Burns.

Langdon continued to cause headaches for United and in the 12th minute he sped past Santalab only to be dragged back by the arm of the defender. What looked clearly to be a yellow card offence wasn't the view of the referee and the offender escaped with merely a free kick.

Arnold finally lost patience with Zane and replaced his main striker with Michael Cunico in the 58th minute.

A corner in the 62nd minute found the head of Sterjovski on the far post. The header beat the 'keeper but was cleared of the goal line by Langdon.

In the 67th minute a lay off by Sterjovski to Steve Eagleton produced an excellent run by the receiver. Just as he was about to shoot Rudan knocked the ball off his foot. It rebounded into the legs of Enes towards his own goal but into the arms of Henderson.

An aerial clash between Bilokapic and Danny Townsend produced a yellow card for Bilokapic when he appeared to punch his opponent as they landed on the ground. Bilokapic, who has already been sent off this season, can count himself lucky that he didn't receive his second on in this incident.

Spirit had an opportunity to score in the 75th minute. Another run by Langdon ended with a pass to Arnold on the left touch line. His cross to the near post found Marusic who was challenged by Crews. Marusic got to the ball first but he couldn't keep it down and it sailed over the bar.

In the 80th minute another ball over the heads of the Spirit defence ended in a well struck half volley from Eagleton which forced Henderson into a good save.

Five minutes later a careless pass from Enes hit the legs of the referee and while the sweeper was arguing with the man in black Berry lobbed the ball over a stranded last line and into the path of the fast breaking Ardone.

The bounce was perfect for Ardone and he produced and excellent chip that looked headed for the back of the net but an alert Henderson plucked the ball out of the air.

A frustrated Spirit couldn't make any headway against the resolute United defence in the last five minutes and the score remained at 1-0 until the end of the game.

The experienced Kupresak was United's most effective player with a very solid game in defence while his long clearances out of defence caused Spirit a number of problems.

MATCH STATS...
Crowd: 6,236

Referee: Simon Micallef

Sydney United: Crews, Plesa (Townsend 71), Vrkic, Kupresak, Santalab, Eagleton, Berry, Ardone, Burns, Sterjovski (Mitchell 76), Caleta (Griffiths 61).

Northern Spirit: Henderson, Enes, Rudan, Moss (Bosnar 68), Casserley, Langdon, Watkins (Arnold 70), Slater, Bilokapic, Marusic, Zane (Cunico 58).

Yellow Cards
United - Plesa 68, Enes 90.
Spirit -Bilokapic 72, Slater 78.

Votes for Player of the Year:
3: Kupresak (Sydney United)
2: Burns (Sydney United)
1: Ardone (Sydney United)

The midfield troika of Burns, Berry and Ardone combined effectively and totally dominated their opponents.

In a disappointing Spirit team Langdon was their best player for the second week in a row while Henderson made some good saves but he continues to exhibit uncertainty in the air.

Marusic was busy and, at times, dangerous but lacked the support and Arnold has to decide whether to play him as a striker or pull him back in midfield where he may provide more creativity for the team.

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SOUTHERN DIVISION

Round Nine

Gippsland Falcons (Tony Pardo, Luke Cheney, Michael Katz)	3	**Melbourne Knights** (Alex Kiratzoglou, Kresimir Basic)	2
VIS (Naum Sekulovski 2, Daniel Vasilevski)	3	**Albury Wodonga** (Adam Griffith)	1
Bulleen Inter (Xhezair Sulimani)	1	**Carlton** (Deniz Ekici, Tony Ouliaris, Serdar Pir)	3

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
VIS	7	6	1	0	19	5	19
South Melbourne	8	6	0	2	13	7	18
Gippsland Falcons	8	3	1	4	11	14	10
Bulleen Inter Kings	7	3	1	3	7	12	10
Carlton	6	3	0	3	16	10	9
Melbourne Knights	7	1	2	4	10	14	5
Albury Wodonga	7	0	1	6	5	19	1

Round Ten

Saturday 12 December

Albury Wodonga v VIS (Myrtleford 5pm)

Sunday 13 December

Melbourne Knights v Gippsland Falcons, (Knights Stadium, 3.30pm)
Carlton v Bulleen Inter, (Optus Oval, 4pm)
Bye v South Melbourne

NORTHERN DIVISION

Round Nine

Newcastle Breakers (Tom Haythornthwaite)	1	**Sydney United Colts**	0
Wollongong Wolves Colts	0	**AIS** (Ivan Ergic 3, Kevo Gulesserian 2, Ljubo Milicevic, Tommy Bajurin)	7
Sydney United	0	**Northern Spirit** (Adam Schneider)	1
Northern Spirit Colts	0	**NSWIS** (Simon Catanzaro 2, Dylan McAllister 2, Mark Byrnes, Liam Austin)	6
Sydney Olympic Academy	0	**Wollongong Wolves** (Ray Younis 2, Christian Zelvis, Kane Maccabei, Paul Tuturevski)	5
Marconi Fairfield (Mark Hagger 2, Danny Invincible, Joe Bruni)	4	**Sydney Olympic** (Ali Jomaa)	1

League Ladder

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Newcastle Breakers	8	7	1	0	22	6	22
Northern Spirit	8	7	0	1	13	6	21
AIS	8	6	1	1	31	8	19
Marconi Fairfield	8	5	2	1	33	6	17
Sydney Olympic	9	5	1	3	29	14	16
NSWIS	6	5	0	1	17	3	15
Wollongong Wolves	6	5	0	1	14	4	15
QAS	8	4	1	3	15	12	13
Sydney United Colts	9	3	0	6	13	19	9
Sydney United	9	2	2	5	10	14	8
Northern Spirit Colts	8	2	1	5	13	26	7
Marconi Fairfield Colts	6	1	0	5	1	13	3
ACTAS	8	1	0	7	14	33	3
Sydney Olympic Academy	9	0	2	7	3	28	2
Wollongong Wolves Colts	8	0	1	7	2	38	1

Round Ten

Friday 11 December

AIS v Newcastle Breakers, (AIS Soccer Field, 5 pm)

Saturday 12 December

NSWIS v Wollongong Wolves Colts, (Valentine Park, 6pm)
QAS v Sydney United, (Suncorp Stadium, 4.30 pm)
Sydney United Colts v Marconi Fairfield, (Edensor Park, 5 pm)

Sunday 13 December

Wollongong Wolves v Northern Spirit Colts, (Brandon Park, 4 pm)
Marconi Fairfield Colts v Sydney Olympic Academy, Marconi Stadium, 5 pm)

Monday 14 December

ACTAS v Northern Spirit, (Bruce Stadium, 4.30 pm)
Bye v Sydney Olympic

Southern Division

The Victorian Institute of Sport moved back to the top of the ladder with a three-one win over Albury Wodonga at Myrtleford on Saturday. Naum Sekulovski scored twice for the VIS and Daniel Vasilevski once, while Adam Griffith scored the Albury goal.

Gippsland Falcons overcame Melbourne Knights by three goals to two in a close battle at Mobil Stadium.

Tony Pardo's goal for the Falcons was cancelled out by Alex Kiratzoglou for the Knights, but in the second half Luke Cheney and Michael Katz seemed to have secured a comfortable win for the Falcons, only for Kresimir Basic to pop up with a late goal for the Knights.

Bulleen Inter held Carlton to a goal to nil in the first half but eventually went down by three goals to one at Egan Lea Reserve on Sunday.

Denis Ekici scored for Carlton after 16 minutes, but it took a penalty save by Dean Anastasiadis, just returned from trialling in Scotland and England, to prevent Bulleen from equalising. Rocco Di Vitto was brought down inthe box at the 38 minute mark and Michael Gulino stepped up to take the penalty.

His shot was low and to the right, but Dean Anastasadis showed his class by saving it. Both sides also hit the woodwork in a tight first half. Xhezair Sulimani scored for Bulleen in the second period, but Tony Ouliaris in 68 and Serdar Pir in 84 saw Carlton home. Ace Stojcevski was very lively for Carlton after coming on as substitute, but his team was really only on top in the last ten minutes.

NYL action ... Ace Stojcevski and Adrian Cuzzupe. Pic by Roy Hay

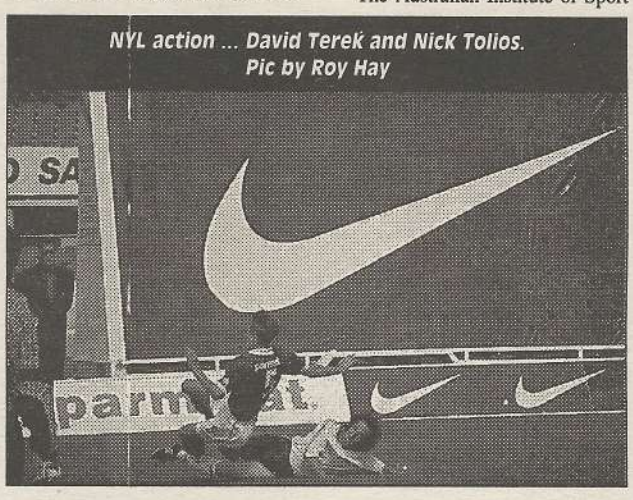
Steve Martin also impressed for Carlton.

Northern Division

Newcastle Breakers struggled to beat the Sydney United Colts by a goal to nil on Friday night. Tom Haythornthwaite scored the winner.

The narrow win keeps the Breakers on top of the ladder, a point clear of Northern Spirit, which had an equally tight match against the Sydney United Youth. Adam Schneider got the decisive goal.

The Australian Institute of Sport moves to third with a much more impressive seven-nil win over the Wollongong Wolves Colts at Brandon Park. Ivan Ergic's opening goal after six minutes seemed about to open the floodgates, but the AIS could only manage one more goal in the first half, again by Ergic on the stroke of half-time.



NYL action ... David Terek and Nick Tolios. Pic by Roy Hay

Tommy Bajurin made it three in 55, the Ergic completed his hat-trick on the hour. Kevo Guleserian added two more in 70 and 89, while sweeper Ljubo Milicevic came up to score in 82 as the Colts ran out of legs late in the game.

Marconi Fairfield jumped over Sydney Olympic following a four-one win in the derby match at Marconi Stadium on Sunday night. Danny Invincible gave Marconi a flying start with a goal in four minutes. Ali Jomaa equalised in 38, but this stung Marconi into reply with two quick goals by striker Mark Hagger in 39 and 44 minutes.

The only goal of the second half came from Joe Bruni in 70 minutes, giving Marconi a clear enough win in the end.

The New South Wales Institute of Sport continued its march up the table with a six goals to nil win over the Northern Spirit Colts. All the damage was done in the opening 25 minutes, and the Institute scored its first in only 30 seconds. Brad Groves cut the ball back for Liam Austin to score after Dylan McAllister deceived the defence.

Ninety seconds later McAllister ran on to a pass from Shane Cansdell-Sheriff and beat a couple of defenders for the second. A long run by Mark Byrnes led to the first goal for Simon Catanzaro after nine minutes, and the same player completed a four or five pass move in 20 minutes. McAllister's second in 26 completed the opening burst of goals. Mark Byrnes scored the only goal of the second half as the Colts mounted a revival. His shot took a deflection over the keeper.

Liam Austin, Alex Leris, with his powerful runs from defence, Catanzaro, Byrnes and McAllister were the best for the Institute, while Adam Monteleone and Nathaniel George were the pick of the Colts.

Wollongong Wolves had a regulation five-nil win over Sydney Olympic Academy. Ray Younis scored twice and the other goals were singles to Christian Zelvis, Kane Maccabei and Paul Tuturevski. Paul Dimech defended well for the Wolves and his distribution was also excellent, while coach Stuart Beedie felt that his team did a workmanlike job against a young group of talented players.

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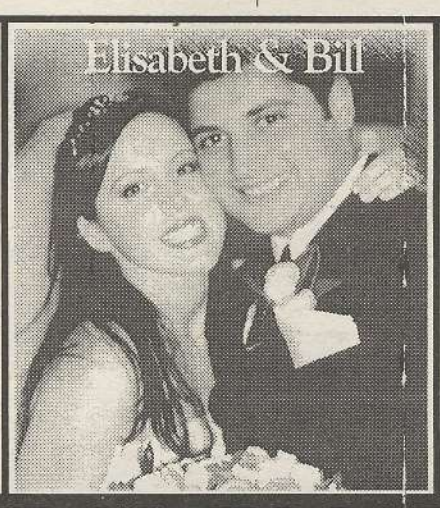

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COMING SOON... HARRY K

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Australian Features

OLYROOS DANCING TO THE HAYDEN FOXE TROT

The Four Diegos continue their VW Combi Van tour of the World by dropping in on Socceroo, Olyroo and Sanfrecce Hiroshima defender Hayden Foxe His elegant defensive play, leadership and composure has, from a young age, attracted the attention of some of the biggest clubs in the world.

Please a big Four Diegos welcome to our second guest of the week.... Hayden Foxe (huge applause ensues).

***Diegos:* "In the recent series against the China Olympic team, you snared yourself two goals for the Olyroos in game two of that series, even though you play as a defender. Were the goals the end result of some pre- planned team play or are you just 'hogging' the ball more and not passing to your team mates?"**

Foxe: "Yes I like to hog it ! Seriously though, I like to have as much input as I can. My first job is to defend and then if I get a chance to score, well great. In game one of that series we lost 1-0 and then in game two, we drew 3-3 in Wollongong. Both results were very disappointing. In both games we were expected to beat China and unfortunately the loss and the draw were not good results for us."

***Diegos:* "With 18 months to the Olympics, how concerned is Raul and the squad about poor results at this stage of your preparation?**

Foxe: "The coaching staff are looking at a few different lads and we know it wasn't our full squad, but in that second game against the Chinese, we were up 2-0 and ended up drawing the game. We've got to learn not give away soft goals. In the Olympics we know we will only have one chance and if we do what we did in that game we can say goodbye to our medal hopes."

***Diegos:* "You left Australia and started to clock up the frequent fliers at a young age. What does it mean for you, as a person who has only ever played senior soccer overseas, to be playing for Australia?"**

Foxe: "Oh mate, I think its every kid's dream to play for Australia. It doesn't matter if it's soccer, tennis, or swimming, it's every young Australian's ultimate goal. You can go and play overseas in various competitions and win different events but to put on that 'Green & Gold' shirt is a totally different feeling."

***Diegos:* "The China series was the first time in 18 months that you have returned home. How hard is it being away from your family and friends for so long?"**

Foxe: "At first when I went overseas, it was very difficult, I got very homesick. You get used to it though. When you get older, you get a bit wiser and you learn to go through the difficult times. Its not easy being away from 'God's Country' — that's what I call it. Australia is the best country in the world. I'm from Sydney, and I think it is the best city in the world. With 'The Four Diegos' being from Melbourne, you may however disagree...

***Diegos:* "Hey Amigo, of course we disagree, you can bet your last enchilada on that, but if you keep scoring for Australia, we'll let you say anything that takes your fancy. You recently made your debut for the Socceroos against the United States on a ground that you described as being comparable to some of the backyard paddocks that you played on as a kid.**

"What was it like playing the Yanks on your debut, and did Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky play any part in the pre game entertainment?"

Foxe: "It was really great. I've been waiting a long time to get my first game with the national team. I was hoping to play a few years ago but injuries hampered my progress. As far as Bill and Monica are concerned well ... Raul wouldn't let us watch that kind of entertainment before a match anyway."

***Diegos:* "One of the biggest fantasies dreamt about by young Aussie soccer players, along with of course, fantasizing that one day Elle McPherson will be their swimming instructor, is that they will be picked up by a European mega club.**

We don't know whether you were taught to swim by Elle, but we do know that Ajax Amsterdam, a club renowned for having possibly, the best youth development program in the world, recruited you as a youngster. How did their interest in you come about and what is it about their program that makes it so highly regarded?"

Foxe: "Ajax recruit kids as young as five years old all the way up to the first team, and teach them the exact same system and style of play. Whatever the first team is being taught the young kids are also being taught.

"I went there straight from the Australian Institute of Sport for a month's trial and I was lucky enough to have done well. They liked what they saw in me as a player and I ended up staying there for 18 months. This gave me a terrific grounding in the game, and I can honestly say that I've never been anywhere like it since."

Hayden Foxe

***Diegos:* "Your currently playing in Japan for Eddie Thomson's J League club, Sanfrecce Hiroshima. How are the local players coping with Eddie's Scottish accent in the change rooms at team talks?**

Foxe: "Well sometimes I can't understand him myself, so I feel sorry for my Japanese mates."

***Diegos:* "The Olyroo team is an exciting squad. The team is littered with what The Four Diegos describe as the new breed of world class talent — a soccer rat pack, skilful, arrogant, mentally tough, confident, frightened of no one and from all reports, pretty good in the nightclubs.**

SOCCER AUSTRALIA

Do you get excited about what this team can potentially achieve?

Foxe: "Its good to see that all the guys in the squad have got their priorities right and really want to make a go of Sydney 2000. Playing for Australia is one thing and playing at the Olympics is another, but playing for Australia in the Olympics in Australia in front of your home crowd has got to be the ultimate."

***Diegos:* "In the Four Diego profile of Hayden Foxe, we describe you as an elegant ball playing defender, with the cool, calm composure of the Road Runner when being pursued by the Coyote.**

"Is your style of play something that you have worked on and have you modelled your game on any one player?

Foxe: "Mate, I'm not too sure. People say I'm cool and calm but sometimes I think it's more a case of me being tired, slow and dopey. I have always had a laid back, easygoing character. I don't worry about too much about anything and I take that attitude out on the football pitch as well."

***Diegos:* "Well Hayden, The Four Diegos would rather you play for the Olyroos as 'Dopey', than for the 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves' anytime. Best wishes for the future and remember that Tacos are always better than Sushi...Ole! Adios Amigo!"**

Foxe: "Do me a favour and try to arrange some one-on-one swimming classes with Elle McPherson? Thanks Diegos. Ole Amigos !"

E-Mail 'The Diegos' on **FourDiegos@bigpond.com**

Until next time .....Adios Amigos !

Welcome to the Four Diegos 'Who is that cute baby now playing in the Ericsson Cup' competition.

Pictured below is an Ericsson Cup star. Can you guess who it is? The answer will be in Soccer Weekly next week. Winners will receive copies of Frank Juric's book 'Claudia and I: The Real Story of her Knight in Shining Armour'

Here are the clues.
1: He is not Hayden Foxe
2: He is a man.
3: He has an unusual nickname
4: He has played in a Grand Final.
5: He is a character.
6: He has played for the Socceroos
7: He has played overseas at club level.
8: We love him and so does Australia

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DIGIPLUS TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROUDLY PRESENTS SW'S GLOBAL GAME

Bayern's Stefan Effenberg and Stuttgart's Soldo clashing in the Bundesliga. Europe is on pages 26 and 27.

Juventus' Blanchard against Galatasary in the Champions Cup.

Brazil's Amoroso seen here playing for Udinese. The latino page is on 22.

Japanese star Nakata playing in the Serie A for Perugia. Asia is on page 20.

Hagi bends one round the Juve wall. The italian page is on 24.

Compiled by **ASIA** Soccer Weekly

FINAL GROUP STANDINGS ASIAN GAMES

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Turkmenistan	2	2	0	0	5	2	6
South Korea	2	1	0	1	6	3	3
Vietnam	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
China	2	2	0	0	8	2	6
Lebanon	2	0	0	1	6	5	3
Cambodia	2	0	0	2	2	9	0

Group C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Japan	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
India	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Nepal	2	0	0	2	0	6	0

Group D

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Qatar	2	2	0	0	6	1	6
Tajikistan	2	1	0	1	4	2	3
Maldives	2	0	0	2	0	7	0

Group E

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
United Arab Emirates	1	1	0	0	3	3	3
North Korea	1	0	0	1	3	3	0

Group F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Thailand	2	2	0	0	7	0	6
Oman	2	1	0	1	6	2	3
Hong Kong	2	0	0	2	0	11	0

Group G

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uzbekistan	2	1	1	0	18	3	4
Kuwait	2	1	1	0	14	3	4
Mongolia	2	0	0	2	0	26	0

Group H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Iran	2	2	0	0	6	0	6
Kazakhstan	2	1	0	1	5	2	3
Laos	2	0	0	2	1	11	0

Results

Nov 30: Turkmenistan 2 Vietnam 0, China 4 Lebanon 1, Hong Kong 0 Oman 6

Dec 1: Nepal 0 Japan 5, Tajikistan 3 Maldives 0, Mongolia 0 Kuwait 11, Kazakhstan 0 Iran 2

Dec 2: South Korea 2 Turkmenistan 3, Cambodia 1 China 4, UAE 3 North Korea 3 (UAE won penalty shoot-out 4-1), Thailand 5 Hong Kong 0

Dec 3: Japan 1 India 0, Qatar 2 Tajikistan 1, Uzbekistan 3 Kuwait 3, Laos 0 Kazakhstan 5

Dec 4: Vietnam 0 South Korea 4, Lebanon 5 Cambodia 1, Oman 0 Thailand 2

Dec 5: India 1 Nepal 0, Maldives 0 Qatar 4, Mongolia 0 Uzbekistan 15, Iran 6 Laos 1

CHINA THROUGH EASILY AGAINST CAMBODIA

Star striker Chen Yang scored a hat trick for China in a lacklustre 4-1 victory over Cambodia, securing his country a spot in the second round for the 13th Asian Games.

Underdog Turkmenistan also earned a second-round berth by overcoming a 2-0 half-time deficit to defeat South Korea in a nail-biting finish, with two goals coming in the final 10 minutes.

The United Arab Emirates and North Korea ended regulation play and extra time at 3-3, settling their Group E match in the southern city of Songkhla with a penalty shootout.

The Emirates won, 7-4.

Playing at the National Stadium on a poor pitch with traces of day-old repairs visible, host Thailand made a fiery debut against Hong Kong, shutting out their opponents 5-0 after leading 3-0 at the half.

Thailand's Kritsada Piandit scored the first goal barely a minute into the match, followed by teammates Worawood Srimaka on a penalty in the eighth minute and Kiatisuk Senamuang in the 22nd minute.

Eight minutes into the second half, Tawan Sripan kicked in Thailand's fourth goal, and Kiatisuk hit the target for the second time at the 40th minute to make the final score 5-0.

The result takes Hong Kong out of competition, since they also lost their Group F opener to Oman.

China fulfilled expectations of topping Group B in Surat Thani with the victory over Cambodia, the 4-1 scoreline mirroring Monday's rout of Lebanon. But though the Chinese dominated, they failed to sparkle.

Chen scored early in the first half, heading in a long pass from midfield. Peng Wang caught a pass on the right side about 10 minutes later and fired his second Asian Games goal.

Chen scored again on a near shot and headed in his third goal in the 38th minute.

Cambodia partially salvaged its honor late in the second half when Hok Sochetra beat the complacent Chinese defense and scored. It was one of the only shots on goal that the Cambodians had.

Following Monday's victory over regional favorite Vietnam, Turkmenistan staged its second upset in Group A in the central city of Nakhon Sawan, eclipsing South Korea.

The South Koreans carved up the Turkmenistan defence in the first half. Yong-Soo Choi gave his team — which hoped to erase memories of a dismal World Cup — a commanding two-goal advantage with an opening-minute goal and a shot that pin-balled off a teammate into the net in the 44th minute.

Turkmenistan regrouped after the half. A long cross found the head of Igor Kislov to put Turkmenistan on the scoreboard. Steady pressure led to a dangerous foul and red card for South Korea's Byoung-Keun Lee.

Muslim Agaev took advantage of the reduced South Korean side with a slicing left-footed shot into the top far corner to equalize. Kislov fired home the winner in the dying minutes.

UZBEKISTAN AND IRAN THRASH ASIA'S MINNOWS; ALI DAIE IN SMASHING FORM

Defending champion Uzbekistan cruised into the second round of the Asian Games tournament with a record 15-0 victory over hapless Mongolia on Saturday.

Iran, playing most of its World Cup team, also came out on top of its first-round group with a 6-1 win over Laos that was not as easy as the final scoreline suggested.

Qatar also moved through with a 4-0 win over the Maldives with all four goals coming from Mohammed Salem Al Kawar.

Uzbekistan topped its group by scoring more against the Mongolians than Kuwait, which emerged with a 11-0 win over the men from the Steppes. That was an Asian Games record, eclipsing China's 7-1 win over India in the 1974 Tehran games.

Kuwait and Uzbekistan drew 3-3. In topping their group, the Uzbeks have a tough second round.

To get into the quarterfinal knockout stage, the Uzbeks will have to win one of the top two places in a second-round group that also includes World Cup 2002 co-hosts Japan and South Korea and the United Arab Emirates.

Kuwait go into a second-round group with Turkmenistan, North Korea and India, which edged out neighboring Nepal 1-0 to clinch its berth with a 46th-minute goal from Carlton Chapman.

But on Saturday, it was all too easy for the Uzbeks to score against a Mongolian side that was in defensive shambles and rarely managed to penetrate into the Uzbekistan penalty area.

Mongolia's debacle began in the 7th minute when defender Altangereil Battulga stopped a goal-bound shot with his hand and was sent off.

The Uzbeks were awarded a penalty and Sergey Libedev converted the first of his two first-half spot kicks.

By the time 15 minutes had gone, Igor Shkvirin had scored a hat trick and the Uzbeks were up 5-0, a total they had doubled by halftime and they were looking set to beat Iran's record 17-0 win over the Maldives in qualifying for the 1998 World Cup in France.

But they eased off — to the point of almost walking the ball around in the last 15 minutes — and scored only five goals in the second half. Libedev ended up with four goals and there were also hat tricks for Nagmetulla Kutibayev and Mirdjajai Kasimov.

By contrast, Iran had to work hard for its win over Laos, which defended in numbers and broke swiftly to give the Iranian defense some anxious moments.

Only three goals in the last eight minutes gave the scoreline some respectability for Iran, which struggled to break down the Lao defence despite a considerable height advantage in lanky Bayern Munich striker Ali Daei.

The Iranians, who had been expected to score a hatful of goals on their way to a second-round group including China, Oman and Qatar, had to wait 26 minutes before cracking the Lao defense.

When they added another four minutes later, the Iranians looked well on the way to a comfortable victory.

But on the stroke of halftime, Laos, which had come close a couple of times, staged another swift breakaway and Soubinh Keophet cracked home a fine goal from the edge of the area.

Urged on by a largely Thai crowd yelling for its neighbor, Laos held out, occasionally looking dangerous, until the 74th minute, when Ali-Reza Mansourian finished off a fine move from close range.

Darioush Yazdani scored with a long-range shot that took a wicked deflection off a defender eight minutes later and then Ali Daie finally got on the score sheet in the 83rd and 87th minutes.

Daie's second goal summed up the Lao day — goalkeeper Phasomphou pushed a free kick onto the bar, but the ball bounced into the net off his back.

Iranian striker Mehdi Mahdavikia wants to snub Chinese champions Dalian Wanda to join English Premier League side Leicester City.

Sources close to the 21-year-old striker said Mahdavikia is not interested in playing in the Chinese league and would favour a move to Europe.

Leicester City, managed by former Northern Ireland international Martin O'Neill, as well as Bundesliga side Bochum have expressed interest in signing the Pirouzi forward, who shot to international fame when he scored his country's winning goal against the United States at the World Cup in France.

"I talked with Mehdi last night and he didn't mention anything about going to China. He said he wanted to play in England because they have the best league in the world," said a friend of the player.

Mahdavikia may have little say in the matter, however.

Pirouzi president Ahmed Abidini has tried to sell his prize asset to Dalian before, prior to the World Cup, and was poised to accept a $2 million transfer fee.

Mahdavikia's form at the World Cup alerted several top European clubs, including Premiership side Tottenham Hotspur and Hamburg of the Bundesliga.

Both pulled out of the race to sign him as it appeared that Mahadavikia would have to complete two-and-a-half years of military service before being allowed to move abroad.

Recently, as a reward for scoring the winning goal against the United States, Mahdavikia was excused from national service by the government, clearing the way for a move abroad.

Compiled by **CROATIA** Soccer Weekly's

John Vrtaric

IT COULD HAVE BEEN SO GOOD FOR LARSSON

The events over the weekend regarding Mark Viduka have been well documented. If he does ever play for Celtic, and that seems like a remote possibility at best, one of his former coaches believes he would have brought the best out in the wayward but deadly Henrik Larsson

According to his former coach, however, it's a wait which should be well worth it both for Celtic and, especially, for Celtic's Swedish striker, Henrik Larsson.

On the face of it, they seem an odd couple. One towering and robust while the other is nimble and speedy but Terry Venables was quick to assure the Parkhead faithful, who already worship Sweden's Player of the Year, that they are about to see the striker's worth soar once Viduka is partnering him up front.

"He's very, very strong and he's got pace and a great touch on the ball for such a big man," Venables said. "He's well suited to the British game and I think he'll score a lot of goals at Celtic.

"I was asked why he didn't play all of the Australian matches and I was happy to assure the DoE that he would have been in my team had he been fit enough but when he did play he was outstanding for us.

"His goal ratio wasn't brilliant but I can tell you this, when he did score, it was against the stronger teams we faced in our qualifying group for the World Cup."

"They'll be fantastic together," he said. "With Viduka's power and touch and Larsson's intelligent use of the ball other teams will be struggling to contain that partnership. It's almost perfect and with the goals Larsson is already scoring you can really only see more once Mark gets in there."

The man himself seemed a little less excitable as he strolled through the arrivals lounge at Glasgow Airport last week. Tall, sinewy and flanked on either side by the twin guardian angels of his girlfriend Ivana and his agent, Viduka looked like a man who was simply happy to be there.

The burly physique is something which will certainly bring an added edge to Dr Jozef Venglos' attack, which has been more used to the elf-like bodies of Larsson, Brattbakk and Burchill. Sheer size makes it a temptation to label him a target man but Viduka believes his style is suited to the traditional Celtic way.

"The Celtic style suits me and I've learnt that style all my life," he said. "I was two years at the Australian Institute of Sport and we had British coaches there so this style suits me and I'm looking forward to playing it.

"I watched the recent Old Firm game and I was very impressed by Celtic. Every one of the players played really well which was reflected in the score. A lot of those games can finish one or two nil but that was a very good result.

"I've always wanted to play in Britain and Celtic is a good club to further my career here and this is a positive move for my international career as well."

Now I guess Celtic will never know how good this partnership could have been. And many are still left wondering about this great Aussie player who signed but did not kick a ball.

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WEEKEND RESULTS & TABLE

Hajduk	3	Varteks	0
Sibenik	3	Slaven Belupo	1
Osijek	2	Hrv. Dragovoljac	1
Zadarkomerc	0	Cibalia	2

Croatia v Rijeka (Playing Monday)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Croatia	15	11	2	2	32	10	35
Rijeka	15	11	1	3	21	11	34
Hajduk	16	9	6	1	32	12	33
Osijek	15	8	2	5	24	14	26
Varteks	16	6	2	8	22	28	20
Hrv. Dragovoljac	16	4	6	6	11	13	18
Zagreb	14	4	6	4	19	22	18
Cibalia	16	4	5	7	15	21	17
Sibenik	16	5	2	9	22	33	17
Zadarkomerc	16	4	3	9	19	29	15
Slaven Belupo	16	3	4	9	20	31	13
Mladost 127	15	3	3	9	15	28	12

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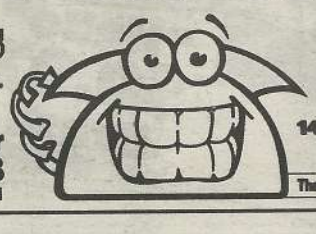

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DIGI0115

Compiled by **LATINO** Soccer Weekly

REAL TOPS VASCO IN INTERCONTINENTAL CUP

European Cup holders Real Madrid of Spain beat South American champions Vasco da Gama of Brazil 2-1 in Japan to take its second Inter-Continental Cup.

Real Madrid, which won the de-facto world club title for the first time in 1960, led 1-0 at halftime after a cross from Brazilian international Roberto Carlos from the left side bounced off Vasco's Nasa into the net in the 25th minute.

But Vasco da Gama, which won the South American Cup for the first time this year, hit back in the 56th minute when Juninho trapped a loose ball after a shot at goal and struck home an equaliser.

Real Madrid, seven-time European champions, scored the decider in the 83rd minute when Spanish international Raul Gonzalez faked off two defenders to score a right-footer from the front of the goal.

"I am very excited," said Gonzalez after he was named the most valuable player.

"I am glad that we have come a long way. I'd like to thank our supporters in Madrid," the 21-year-old forward added.

Seedorf and coach Hiddink at Amsterdam airport en-route to Madrid.

Real Madrid fans celebrate

"I also know that Japanese fans have been cheering for us all along and I feel happy about that."

Roberto Carlos, who helped Brazil finish runners-up to France in the World Cup finals last July in France, also said Real Madrid had made "every kind of effort" to win the title.

The Spanish team only arrived here last Friday while Vasco da Gama trained here for more than two weeks to acclimatise themselves to the northern hemisphere winter.

"We have finally won the world championship," said the 25-year-old defender.

Roberto Carlos and Italian Christian Panucci led Real Madrid's offensive from the beginning with attacks from both sides. Carlos' cross in the 25th minute was too fast for Nasa to deflect away from the goal.

Vasco da Gama began to counter-attack after the interval.

Luizao crossed a pass to Ramon in the 56th minute. Juninho banged in a missed shot by Ramon.

But Real Madrid went ahead when Clarence Seedorf floated a long pass and Gonzales charged in from the left side and scored the winner.

Vasco da Gama had 15 shots on goal against 14 for Real Madrid.

BOCA JUNIORS CELEBRATES FAMOUS WIN

The Boca Juniors, the country's most fanatically supported club, captured its first Argentine championship in six years.

The celebrations began when Gimnasia-La Plata was held to a 1-1 draw at home by Rosario Central. Gimnasia began the day as the only team with a chance of catching Boca but needed a win to keep its faint hopes alive.

Minutes later, Boca finished its home game with Independiente, a goalless draw.

The results kept Boca, unbeaten in 17 games, nine points clear of Gimnasia with two games each to play in the Apertura (Opening) championship, the first of two championships in the Argentine season which has no overall champion.

Boca's famous Chocolate Box stadium erupted when the Gimnasia result was announced and the last few seconds of their game was played in an atmosphere of total delirium.

Thousands of Boca fans, who have seen archrival River Plate and upstart Velez Sarsfield walk off with a succession of titles since their last success, poured onto the streets of central Buenos Aires to celebrate their team's triumph at the Obelisk landmark.

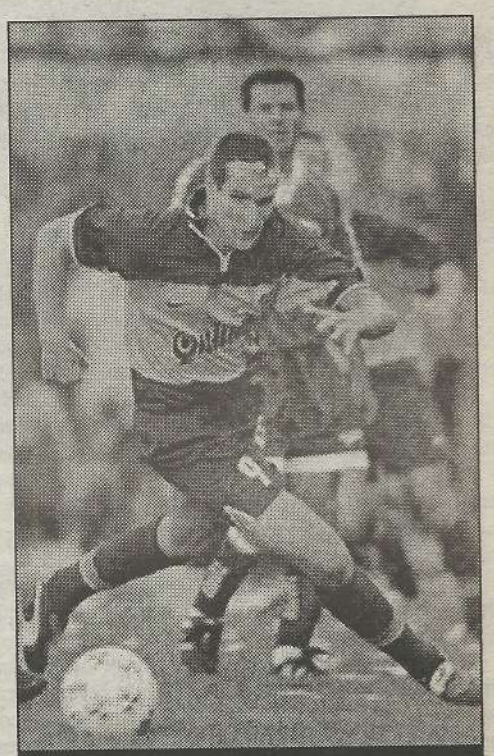
Thousands gathered around the Obelisk monument in the heart of the city, screaming "Champion! Champion!" Other dancing and chanting fans pored into La Boca, the city neighborhood home to the team and its stadium.

Sounds of honking car horns and drum beats could be heard throughout the city.

The championship capped off a magical season thus far for Boca, who after 17 games remainundefeated with 12 wins and five draws.

Boca clinched the championship even before the end of Sunday's match following a 1-1 tie between second-place Gimnasia Esgrima de la Plata and Rosario Central. With Boca leading by nine points in the standings, the draw gave Boca an insurmountable lead with two games left in the season.

News of the tie reached Boca's La Bombonera stadium just after the start of the second half.



Boca star Martin Palermo

"Boca is a great champion," said President Carlos Menem, an admitted fan of Boca's archrival, River Plate.

Boca has lead the league standings all season long, benefiting from one of the weaker campaigns in recent years. Nonetheless, new coach Carlos Bianchi has his players performing well. And he's got Martin Palermo, the league's leading scoring.

Some 2,000 police officers were on hand to monitor fan behavior but reported only a few minor incidents.

TABLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Boca Juniors	17	12	5	0	41	16	41
Gimnasia La Plata	17	9	5	3	28	21	32
Racing	17	8	6	3	36	26	30
Lanus	17	8	5	4	19	18	29
Colon	16	7	4	5	25	21	25
Union	17	6	7	4	30	28	25
San Lorenzo	17	6	6	5	36	30	24
Rosario Central	17	6	5	6	24	28	23
Velez Sarsfield	17	5	6	6	22	21	22
Indepenciente	17	4	8	5	23	23	22
Estudiantes	17	5	6	6	18	19	21
Talleres Cordoba	17	6	3	8	22	32	21
Newell's Old Boys	17	5	6	6	16	17	21
Gimnasia Jujuy	17	3	10	4	25	25	19
Huracan	17	5	4	8	28	39	19
Argentinos Juniors	16	3	9	4	22	22	18
River Plate	17	4	6	7	25	26	18
Belgrano Cordoba	17	4	6	7	22	30	18
Ferro Carril Oeste	17	4	4	9	19	27	16
Platense	17	2	4	11	18	37	10

Note: The Apertura (Opening) is the first of two championships played in the Argentine season. The teams play each other once in each and there is no overall champion.

RIVAL FANS TAUNT VASCO

Hundreds of Flamengo supporters celebrated as if their team had won a title after bitter rivals Vasco da Gama lost to Real Madrid in the World Club Cup final.

The fans, wearing Flamengo's red and black shirts, let off fireworks and hooted car horns all over the city after Vasco lost 2-1 to the European champions in Tokyo.

One group of Flamengo fans, formed especially to support Real Madrid in Tuesday's match, promised to parade through the city on Sunday.

Flamengo, who won the World Club title in 1981, boast Brazil's biggest support but their fickle supporters have had nothing to celebrate this year.

However, Vasco have won the South American Libertadores Cup and the Carioca (Rio de Janeiro state) championship in their centenary year.

When Vasco returned to Brazil after winning the Libertadores away to Ecuador's Barcelona, they paraded through the streets on top of a fire engine and their victory route passed directly in front of Flamengo's headquarters.

The fans took it one step further when they bought large advertising spaces in leading newspapers on Wednesday to taunt rivals Vasco over their World Club title defeat the day before.

"The...nation congratulates Vasco da Gama for the title of world vice-champions in its centenary year," said the advertisements in several Rio dailies.

The ads were signed: "Flamengo Regattas Club. World champions" referring to the fact that Flamengo, initially founded as a rowing club, won the title in 1981.

Vasco, Flamengo's arch enemies, was beaten 2-1 by European champions Real Madrid in Tokyo.

When Vasco won the South American Libertadores Cup earlier this year, the victory parade passed directly in front of Flamengo's headquarters.

Vasco still has an opportunity for another title. The Brazilian club faces Major League Soccer's D.C. United in the second leg of the Interamerican Cup on Dec. 5. Vasco won the first leg of the tournament, which is played between the Libertadores Cup champion and the CONCACAF Champions Cup winner, 1-0 in Washington, D.C.

Compiled by **GREECE** Soccer Weekly's A.D. Akratos

THE DOUBLE-HEADED EAGLES SOAR

A DIVISION - WEEK 11

Demis' hat-trick puts AEK on top

Demis Nikolaidis scored three goals to help AEK dismantle Aris, 6-0, at the Nikos Goumas Stadium outside of Athens with Christos Maladenis and Toni Savevski the other goal scorers for AEK

The first goal came off the head of Aris' Katsaros in just the 4th minute as he tried to send a Savevski cross out of bounds but instead sent the ball just inside the post and put AEK up 1-0.

Maladenis was the first to score for AEK, giving the home team a 2-0 lead, in the 33rd minute when Haris Kopitsis looked to shoot but slyly passed the ball into the area in front of a waiting Maladenis, who controlled the ball with the outside of his right foot, took two steps and then blasted a shot into the back of the net.

Savevski set up Nikolaidis in the 54th minute when his free kick from the left side found the charging head of the AEK captain. Aris goalkeeper Kateryiannakis came out to punch away the cross, but changed his mind and was caught on his heels as the header came thundering in.

Savevski scored the next one himself in the 57th minute. The midfielder sent in a corner from the right side that landed right in the hands on Karteryiannakis. The Aris keeper couldn't hold on to the spinning ball, which bounced off his chest and made its way into the net.

Nikolaidis managed the hat trick with goals in the 78th and 80th minutes. The first came as he walked into the area alone and shot to the right side, barely beating the keeper and barely going in as the ball hit the post and deflected into the opposite corner. The final goal came as Kopitsis rocketed a shot from the left side that Karteryiannakis did well to get a hand on. But the ball bounced off the cross bar and landed at the feet of AEK's Daniel Batista, who then fed Nikolaidis for the goal.

Aris was completely outmatched and did not have even one scoring chance until the 64th minute when Carlos Flores weakly shot at AEK keeper Elias Atmatsidis.

De Souza scores two to lead Olympiakos

Brazilian Luciano De Souza scored twice as Olympiakos easily rolled over Kavala, 4-1, at the Olympic Stadium with Alexis Alexandris and Predrag Djorjevic scoring the other two.

It was the final goal of the game, however, that caught the attention of the fans as De Souza fired a 30 metre shot in the 79th minute that bypassed the Kavala goalkeeper, Logaras, and landed in the left corner of the net.

The first goal of the game came in just the 10th minute when Alexandris volleyed a shot from in close that Logaras had no chance of saving. The defending champions went up 2-0 in the 36th minute when Stylianos Giannakopoulos centered a pass to De Souza, who slid in towards the net and beat Logaras to the ball.

Kavala was able to get one back just before the halftime whistle as Nasiopoulos took a nice pass from Hatzizisis and beat Olympiakos keeper Dimitris Eleftheropoulos.

Djorjevic scored in the 62nd minute from the penalty spot after Kavakas illegally brought down Ilija Ivic in the area. The win, along with the three points given to Olympiakos following the decision over the abandoned game with PAOK, puts the "Legend" (aka Thrillos) tied with Panathinaikos in second place on 25 points (both 8-1-2).

Late spurt lifts Panionios over Paniliakos

Dimitris Nalitzis was good for three goals as Panionios slipped by Paniliakos, 5-2. The home team scored three goals in the final minutes to seal the victory after Nalitzis had tied the score at 1-1 just before halftime after a 1-2 with Garry Haylock.

Nalitzis put his team ahead in the 53rd minute, but Moschoyiannis brought Paniliakos level again in the 59th minute after taking a pass from Papandreou.

Most of the goals came after the 86th minute as Antonis Sapountzis fired in a shot and then both Nalitzis and Ioannou added in stoppage time.

Panionios now sits atop a five-way tie for 7th place with 16 points (5-1-4) and a game in hand against OFI and scheduled for the week ahead.

Demis Nikolaidis

Takola double downs Panelefsiniakos

Mirko Takola was able to get two second half goals to lift PAOK to a 3-1 triumph over visiting Panelefsiniakos, 3-1 at the Toumba Stadium. PAOK went ahead as early as the 4th minute as Pendelis Konstantinidis took advantage of a pinpoint cross from Comingez.

Kaklamanos put Panelefsiniakos on equal terms in the 51st minute as he was fed by Tzivelekis.

It was then up to Takola to finish the scoring as he added a pair in the 62nd and 80th minutes.

The first goal came via a header after a Bandovic corner and the second after winning a 50-50 ball and firing away past keeper Nikolaidis.

Ionikos hammers three past Apollon

Craig Brewster scored one and forced another as Ionikos downed Apollon 3-0. Brewster was the first goal scorer of the game with a fine effort in the 45th minute as Moutsondringo centered the ball to the Scotsman, who headed the ball into the net.

Ionikos got an early Christmas present in the 51st minute as it was Brewster who this time tried to return the favour by setting up Moutsodringo. Brewster was running down the right side when he crossed a low ball in front of the net. Both Moutsodringo and Apollon defender Diamantis came running in and as Diamantis tried to clear the ball away it tragically went into the net.

The final goal came from Frousos in the 90th minute on a pass from Xanthopoulos.

OFI snatches narrow victory

Voldemar Adamsik was the lone goal scorer, but one was enough to send OFI past Proodeftiki. Adamsik took a pass from Skentzos in the 68th minute and fired past Proodeftiki goalkeeper Karasavas.

Almanidis had a chance to give Proodeftiki the lead in the 54th minute but his penalty shot hit the post and bounced out. The penalty was awarded after Diara brought down Almanidis in the area.

Ethnikos continues to struggle in 4-0 loss

Two goals in each half gave Iraklis more than enough to overcome struggling Ethnikos, 4-0 as Kuriazis, Sapanis, Velentzas and Stoltidis were each able to get their names on the scoresheet for the hosts.

The first goal came as Kofidis centered in a pass which Kuriazis headed home in just the 6th minute. Sapanis made it 2-0 in time added on to the first half as he created a piece of individual magic.

Velentzas scored in the 63rd minute after being found in close by Xenidis and Stoltidis blasted in a goal in the 76th minute to round out the scoring.

Kiparissis stuns PAO

Thomas Kaparissis broke a 0-0 tie in the second minute-of stopage time to lift Xanthi over Panathinaikos, 1-0, in a top-of-the-table clash at the Xanthis Stadium.

Kaparissis, who was fed by a long loft pass from Christos Patsatzoglou from midfield, raced past Panathinaikos defender Leonidas Vokolos, strode into the area and jumped in time to head the ball towards the net.

Panathinaikos goalkeeper Josef Wandzik should have made an easy save on the soft header, but he came off his line as the loft came into the area. Changing his mind he was caught in no-mans land and by the time he decided to turn back it was to late as he chased the ball into the net.

Panathinaikos stays tied with Olympiakos in 2nd place on 25 points, both one point behind league leaders AEK. Xanthi picks up three points to go to 23, but remains in fourth place.

This was the third shaky league performance in a row for Panathinaikos, who escaped with a tight 3-2 victory over Iraklis last weekend but we were held to a 0-0 draw the week before by last placed Ethnikos.

Hosts Xanthi almost had the lead from the first minute as Sotiris Antoniou beat Vladan Milojevic to the ball and headed it to Petros Teggelidis on the left side, but the shot went wide. Xanthi finished the game with a 15-10 advantage in shots on goal and won an astounding 41 fouls while giving up only 17.

The best chance for Panathinaikos came in the 88th minute when Nikos Limberopoulos blasted a free kick from outside the area straight on goal. Yurai Bucek made a great save but the rebound went to Igor Sipniewski on the right side. Sipniewski shot point-blank, but Bucek made another great save.

Again the rebound came back into play, this time to Frank Strandli, who was standing directly in front of the goal. Strandli took a look and powered a shot from in close but Bucek came up trumps for the third time in a matter of seconds by repelling the final shot.

The visitors had two other golden chances to get on the scoreboard, once in the 71st minute when Krzysztof Warziecha hit the cross bar from in close and then again in the 73rd minute when Milojevic crossed in a perfect pass to Sipniewski, whose diving header was kept out of the net by the outstretched fingers of Bucek.

IN BRIEF

● Greek International Alexis Alexoudis of PAO is currently in London trialling with Charlton. Following the successes of Dabizas at Newcastle and Borbokis at Sheffield United, to name a few, Alexoudis favours his chances.

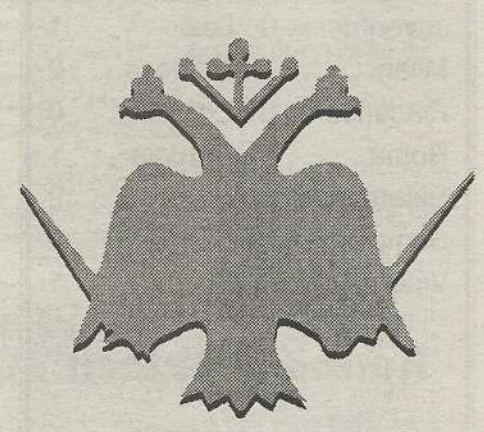
One of Charlton's problems this season has been strike power and the mercurial Alexoudis could be the answer. His contract runs out at the end of the season and is entitled to a free transfer to any EU club.

PAO President Vardinogiannis andEPAE (Greek FA) have already expressed their willingness to assist the player achieve his dream of playing in England.

● Nikos Machlas is living up to his reputation as the original "Greek Lightning" with club Vitesse Arnhem. Recently they played Ajax in the league and in a titanic struggle with the fading Dutch giants the home team scored a 3-2 triumph with the golden Greek scoring the opener and setting up the second goal in yet another great effort.

● Another one bites the dust! OFI have become the latest addition to Greece's export market when they transferred their fourth first team player to another team abroad. Following the footsteps of Nikos Papavasiliou (Newcastle), Nikos Machlas and Kostas Haniotakis (both Vitesse Arnhem), international forward Yiannis Anastasiou has joined Anderlecht of Belgium where he will be joining compatriot Hristo Kostis.

Pending a physical Anastasiou will officially join the Belgian club on 1 January 1999.



● AEK's "Number 8", Toni Savevski completes 10 years at the club and holds the proud distinction of having never been dropped since his debut against Larissa on 10 December 1998. The 25 year old will be honoured with a function in his honour during the week and details of a testimonial are not yet finalised.

● AEK'S new coach, Ukranian Oleg Blochin has announced he is prepared to make sweeping changes to the playing ranks in order to achieve his ambitions.

Although his debut was superb, a six goal thrashing of Aris including a hat-trick from the irrepressible Demis, Blochin sees the club's inconsistent results as his most immediate worry- and a blamw he puts squarely on the shoulders of the players.

In the coming weeks he will be evaluating the futures of the entire playing staff, starting with the clubs four imports, before delving into the transfer market.

Very much a case of deliver or else!

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Compiled by Soccer Weekly

ITALY

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THE WEEK: JUVE STILL STRUGGLES, NEW INTER COACH

Turkey's Galatasary knocked in a last-minute goal to secure a 1-1 draw against Italy's Juventus in a tense European Champions' League Group B match in Istanbul.

Nicola Amoruso put Juventus ahead with a 76th-minute goal shocking the Turks as they were reforming after a double substitution.

Juventus responded to the goal by bringing on defender Igor Tudor for striker Filippo Inzaghi.

But the Turkish side squeezed through the defence and was rewarded by a headed goal from Suat Kaya just before the final whistle.

The result puts the Turks on top of the group on goals scored over Rosenborg (both teams have eight points) and leaves Juventus in third with five points and one match to play.

Neither side excelled in a match dominated by the offside flag. It was played under heavy security after being delayed for a week amid safety concerns caused by a diplomatic row between Ankara and Rome.

Here is the World All-Stars line-up for the match against the Italian national team in the Italian federation's Centennial match at Rome's Stadio Olimpico on December 16:

Goalkeepers: Gianluca Pagliuca (Italy/Inter Milan), Ike Shorunmu (Nigeria/FC Zurich)

Defenders: Dunga (Brazil/Jubilo Iwata), Fernando Hierro (Spain/Real Madrid), Taribo West (Nigeria/Inter Milan), David Nyathi (South Africa/Cagliari), Cafu (Brazil/AS Roma), Lilian Thuram (France/Parma)

Midfielders/Strikers: Julen Guerrero (Spain/Athletic Bilbao), Zinedine Zidane (France/Juventus), Joao Pinto (Portugal/Benfica), Manuel Rui Costa (Portugal/Fiorentina), Ronaldo (Brazil/Inter Milan), Gabriel Batistuta (Argentina/Fiorentina), George Weah (Liberia/AC Milan), Davor Suker (Croatia/Real Madrid), Oliver Bierhoff (Germany/AC Milan), Luis Hernandez (Mexico/Necaxa), Marcelo Salas (Chile/Lazio).

Pensive Juve players enter the arena in Turkey midweek. An estimated 20,000 security personnel were assigned to this controversial game. It ended 1-1.

Brazilian striker Ronaldo missed Inter Milan's Italian Cup quarter-final away to Lazio last Thursday, bringing to 14 the number of league and cup matches missed so far this season.

Ronaldo, still trying to shake off knee tendon problems aggravated during the World Cup in France, hopes to return to the side for this week's decisive Champions League tie away to Austrian side Sturm Graz.

"I'll play again when I'm 100 percent right," said Ronaldo in the Thursday edition of Inter's official web site.

"When my physiotherapist (Nilton) Petroni arrived here from Brazil, we said that it would take three weeks to get me back fit again," he said.

"We're coming to the end of those three weeks and I feel much better even if I can't say for certain when I'll be 100 percent fit."

Earlier, Ronaldo caused alarm within club circles when telling a Milan TV station that the "chronic" nature of his knee problems meant that he might be forced to limit the number of games he plays.

Inter immediately denied that Ronaldo was suffering from any long term problem, claiming that his remarks had been due to a linguistic misunderstanding.

The club repeated its view that the right knee tendon problem which has plagued Ronaldo since the World Cup "now seems to be finally resolving itself."

Inter again took the opportunity to criticise the Brazilian Federation's handling of Ronaldo during the World Cup and said: "The truth is that Ronaldo played for Brazil (during the World Cup) thanks to the "help" of painkillers and anti-inflammatory pills which eased the pain but which, at the end of the day, seriously compromised his complete recovery."

Ronaldo also used the Web site to reply to remarks by Inter Milan's ex-coach Gigi Simoni, sacked and replaced by Rumanian Mircea Lucescu.

Simoni had suggested that he might not have lost his job if Ronaldo had been regularily fit and available this autumn.

"I respect Simoni as a person and a friend to us all but I have also the right to be injured," Ronaldo said.

"Inter have some great players and could have played better even without me."

Serie A
Round Twelve

Cagliari	0	Venezia	1
Fiorentina	1	Bologna	0
Juventus	0	Lazio	1
Milan	3	Udinese	0
Piacenza	0	Empoli	0
Roma	5	Perugia	1
Salernitana	2	Bari	2
Sampdoria	0	Parma	2
Vicenza	1	Inter	1

Round Thirteen

BARI V EMPOLI
BOLOGNA V SALERNITANA
FIORENTINA V JUVENTUS
LAZIO V SAMPDORIA
MILAN V VICENZA
PARMA V ROMA
PERUGIA V CAGLIARI
UDINESE V INTER
VICENZA V PIACENZA

Inter players with new Romanian coach Lucescu (far right). Ronaldo is far left with the beanie on.

Barcelona has signed a pre-contract with Fabio Capello to take over at the Catalan club next season, Spanish newspapers reported.

According to the reports, Capello, who was replaced as coach of AC Milan in May but is still employed by the Italian club, will sign a three-year contract worth 1,500 million pesetas ($10.64 million) beginning on July 31, 1999.

No-one at Barcelona was available for comment.

Speculation over the future of current coach Louis van Gaal has been rife since the club was knocked out of the European Cup in the Champions' League stage for the second successive season.

With Barcelona's domestic form also patchy — two successive defeats have seen it slip to fifth place in the Spanish first division — van Gaal has come under heavy criticism from the Catalan press and public.

The Dutch coach has maintained that he will not resign, insisting that the time to judge his success or failure will be at the end of the season.

Van Gaal came through a similar ordeal last season after the side finished bottom of its Champions' League group but then went on to lift the Spanish league and cup double.

But Real Madrid's European Cup success last season put further pressure on van Gaal to bring success in Europe this term. With progress in the European Cup now out of the question for another year, Barcelona is almost certain to turn to a new coach next season.

Capello is held in high regard in Spain for winning the league title with Real Madrid in 1996, when Barcelona — then coached by Bobby Robson — was led by star striker Ronaldo.

More Serie A on page 27.

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DIG0115

Compiled by AFRICA Soccer Weekly

MOROCCO BIDS FOR WORLD CUP AS HADJI IS VOTED BEST IN AFRICA

Moroccan midfielder Mustapha Hadji was named Africa's Footballer of the Year by the Confederation of African Football in Cairo.

The Deportivo Coruna player was cited by the award's committee for his performances in the World Cup finals in France and won a narrow vote over Nigeria's Austin 'Jay Jay' Okocha.

Hadji polled 76 votes to Okocha's 74 in the ballot of members of CAF's technical and press committees.

The 27-year-old midfielder is the fourth Moroccan to win the award but the first since goalkeeper Badou Ezaki in 1986.

Ironically, Hadji almost never played for the country of his birth, making a difficult decision five years ago to play for Morocco rather than accept a call-up from the French Under-21 team.

Hadji, whose family moved to France while he was still a toddler, started his career at second division Nancy before moving to Sporting Lisbon in Portugal in 1996.

He was won 38 caps for his country and scored nine goals, including two at the World Cup finals in France.

He also played at the 1994 World Cup finals in the U.S.

Nigerian Sunday Oliseh finished third in the voting, with veteran Egyptian striker Hossam Hassan fourth and 21-year-old South African Benni McCarthy fifth.

Last year's winner, Victor Ikpeba of Nigeria, did not poll any votes this year.

Results of the voting for the African Footballer of the Year award, announced by the Confederation of African Football:

1. Mustapha Hadji (Deportivo Coruna and Morocco) 76
2. Austin Okocha (Paris St Germain and Nigeria) 74
3. Sunday Oliseh (Ajax Amsterdam and Nigeria) 58
4. Hossam Hassan (Al Ahli and Egypt) 34
5. Benedict McCarthy (Ajax Amsterdam and South Africa) 24
6. Tchiressoa Guel (ASEC Abidjan and Ivory Coast) 16
7. Charles Akunoor (VfL Wolfsburg and Ghana) 12
8. Marc-Vivien Foe (Lens and Cameroon) 10
9. Finidi George (Real Betis and Nigeria) 8
10. Rigobert Song (Salernitana and Cameroon) 6

CONGO GETS CASH

FIFA has made a grant of 15 million CFA francs ($26,500) to cash-strapped Congo Republic to enable the national team to take part in the 2000 Olympics officials said.

They said the grant was agreed by FIFA's Zurich headquarters following a plea from Congolese Football Federation president Sylvestre Mbongo.

No other details were available.

The Central African country is facing severe financial hardship following the devastating six-month civil war that ended last October.

Botswana fans had a rare chance to celebrate after a 3-0 home victory over Swaziland in a 2000 Olympic Games qualifier at the weekend.

All the goals came in the second half of the preliminary-round, first-leg match and man-of-the-match Diphetogo Felolwane played a significant role in each one.

Phineas Maimela put the Zebras ahead with a close-range shot after 48 minutes in Gaborone, Edwin Disang converted a penalty 10 minutes later and Innocent Ranku headed the third midway through the half.

The return match on December 13, offers success-starved Botswana a golden opportunity to reach the first round and a clash with defending Olympic champions Nigeria, Angola, Zambia or Zimbabwe.

Uganda is in trouble after defeating Sudan only 2-1 in windy Kampala where Ibrahim Sekajja and Hassan Mubiru were on target for the home team before Osman Zakih reduced arrears.

Sekajja scored off a cross and Mubiru, who struck twice against Algeria in an African Nations Cup qualifier last month, pushed the ball into the net following a dazzling dribble Kenya was another East African country to struggle at home with an early goal from Simon Mulama all it had to show for dominating Tanzania in the central town of Nakuru.

Namibia was held 0-0 by Mozambique The first round next June will also be staged over two legs with the 12 winners being split into three mini-leagues.

Group winners qualify for the Olympics in Sydney in 2000.

Mustapha Hadji at France 98.

CUP RESULTS

Champions League final, first leg

At Harare
Dynamos, Zimbabwe 0 ASEC, Cote d'Ivoire 0
Second leg - Dec 13

CAF Cup final, second leg

At Sfax
CS Sfaxien, Tunisia 3 Jeanne d'Arc, Senegal 0
Sfaxien win 4-0 on aggregate

Olympic Games, preliminary round, first leg

At Nakuru
Kenya 1 (Simon Mulama 13) Tanzania 0

At Kampala
Uganda 2 (Ibrahim Sekajja 63, Hassan Mubiru 78) Sudan 1 (Osman Zakih 85)

At Gaborone
Botswana 3 (Phineas Maimela 48, Edwin Disang 58-pen, Innocent Ranku 66) Swaziland 0

At Windhoek
Namibia 0 Mozambique 0
Second leg: Dec 11-13

FACTFILE

CAF Cup Champions ...
Sportif Sfaxien (Tunisia)

Standard team
Nacer Bedoui, Hatem Trabelsi, Boujelbene, Sami Trabelsi, Rachid Bouaziz, Karim Ghorbal, Bechir Ben Ahmed, Skander Souayah, Jilani Boussif, Mohamed Salah Neftah, Banza Kasongo.
Coach: Erhardt Krautzen (Ger)

Route to victory
First round: Etoile Filante, Togo 4-0 home 0-0 away
Second round: Army, Cote d'Ivoire 3-1, 0-0
Quarter-finals: DSA, Madagascar 2-0, 0-1
Semi-finals: DC Motema Pembe, DR Congo 5-0, 2-1
Final: Jeanne d'Arc, Senegal 3-0, 1-0

Scorers
8 - Souayah
3 - Kasongo, Meftah
2 - H.Trabelsi
1 - Ahmed, Bouaziz, Louis Gomis, Tarak Tayeb
Colours: Black and white striped shirts, white shorts and socks
Ground: Taieb Mhiri Stadium, Sfax (capacity 25,000)
Formed: 1928

MOLOTO NEW BAFANA SUPREMO

Trott Moloto stepped out of the shadows Thursday when he was named national coach of South Africa.

The shy, soft-spoken former professional footballer was understudy this year to Jomo Sono at the African Nations Cup and to Frenchman Philippe Troussier at France '98 this summer.

Troussier's contract was not renewed after Bafana Bafana (The Boys) were eliminated in the first round of the World Cup, where they lost to eventual champions France and drew with Denmark and Saudi Arabia.

Moloto, caretaker coach since Troussier's departure, has signed a 15-month contract, but details of his financial package were not disclosed.

A South African Football Association source said Moloto, 42, would be paid about 10,000 dollars a month, placing him just below Henri Michel of Morocco and Thijs Libregts of Nigeria.

The announcement ended months of speculation that a big-name foreigner would take control of a team ranked fifth on the continent behind Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Zambia.

Those linked with the post included Carlos Alberto Parreira, coach of Brazil's 1994 World Cup-winning team, and Berti Vogts, who resigned as coach of Germany in September following two unsuccessful World Cup campaigns.

Vogts denied South African claims that he had applied, saying an agent had spoken to national football association off cials without his permission.

Parreira visited South Africa last week and was reportedly angry after being told he would have to be interviewed by local officials, coaches and former stars before a choice was made.

Media speculation has hinted at Parreira joining Moloto in mid-2000 when the qualifying rounds begin for the 2002 World Cup in South Korea and Japan.

Morocco have become the sixth nation to officially enter the race to stage the 2006 World Cup finals, FIFA confirmed.

Morocco, which unsuccessfully bid for the 1994 and 1998 finals, added its name to those of England, Egypt, Brazil, Ghana and Germany, which all submitted official bids to FIFA last month.

South Africa is expected to become the third African nation to declare its official interest in the very near future.

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has repeatedly advocated the 2006 finals being staged in Africa for the first time if all the conditions laid down by FIFA for hosting the tournament — stadium facilities, transportation, telecommunications, security and hotels — can be met.

FIFA's deadline for the first declaration of intent is Dec. 31 and the deadline for a formal written commitment to bid for the tournament is April 1 next year.

FIFA inspections will be completed by Jan. 31, 2000 with the decision being made by the Executive Committee in March 2000.

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DIG0115

Compiled by **EUROPE** Soccer Weekly

NICE ONE ROMA BUT NO GRAZIE

The president of Nice has decided not to sell the second division team to Italian giant AS Roma, the French sports daily L'Equipe reported.

"The club is no longer for sale. We have already lost precious time and do not want to waste more," Nice president Milan Mandaric was quoted by the newspaper as saying.

After talks with Roma officials, Mandaric, an American businessman, decided that a sale to Roma would not be in the club's interest.

Mandaric told the paper that the club has attracted a new investor. Earlier, Roma officials had said that a takeover was imminent.

The move was intended to encourage youth development at Nice and give second string Roma players experience in the French league.

Second-division Atalanta rallied for a 3-2 upset Wednesday in an Italian Cup first-leg quarterfinal against Serie A leader Fiorentina, which saw its Brazilian striker Edmundo score one goal and set up another before being sent off for arguing with the referee.

An unmarked Massimo Carrera headed in the winner from 10 meters out with eight minutes to play for Atalanta, the only Serie B team left in the competition.

Edmundo provided the fireworks in the first 37 minutes, but his expulsion hurt Fiorentina's bid to hold onto its lead.

He stole the ball from Carrera, rounded goal keeper Alberto Fontana and fired a shot that deflected off defender Fabio Rustico for a 1-0 lead in the eighth minute.

Another own-goal allowed Atalanta to tie the score 20 minutes later, when midfielder Fabio Gallo's shot went in off Fiorentina defender Moreno Torricelli's leg.

Edmundo made it 2-1 in the 34th, dribbling by two defenders and sending a low blast inside the left post from 15 meters.

Three minutes later, though, he was gone, as referee Alfredo Trentalange pulled out the red card.

Buoyed by the man-advantage, Atalanta leveled again in the 65th, when striker Fausto Rossini flicked in the ball with his heel. Then Carrera decided the match, meeting Christian Zenoni's cross.

Argentine star Gabriel Batistuta had two shots fly off the post for Fiorentina, the 1996 Italian Cup winner.

On Wednesday, Udinese edged AC Parma 3-2 as Argentine defender Mauro Esteban Navas slotted an injury-time winner past stand-in goal keeper Hernan Crespo.

Crespo, an Argentine striker, was forced to guard Parma's net when starter Matteo Guardalben left with an injury after the team had already used its three allotted substitutions.

Defending titlist Lazio of Rome hosts Internazionale of Milan in another quarterfinal Thursday, while Juventus plays Bologna January 13 in a match postponed because the Turin club played a Champions League match at Istanbul Wednesday. Second-leg games are slated for January 26.

Arsenal's Ray Parlour and Lee Dixon have been suspended for at least one European match following incidents during their club's defeat by Lens last week, UEFA said Wednesday.

UEFA's control and disciplinary body also suspended Lens' Tony Vairelles for one match for "unsporting behavior." The French champion's 1-0 victory at Wembley eliminated Arsenal from contention for the Champions League quarterfinals.

Arsenal midfielder Parlour was sent off in the final minute for striking Cyril Rool. He was followed a minute later by Vairelles for a foul on Dixon.

Dixon's suspension was imposed for "an elbow-strike in the back of an opponent," UEFA said.

Although referee Anders Frisk did not card Dixon, UEFA ruled he initiated the incident by elbowing Vairelles in the back.

Vairelles and Lens coach Daniel Leclercq accused Dixon of feigning injury to get the French international striker sent off, which came just seconds after Parlour was given his red card for going after Rool.

The disciplinary body will take a final decision in January on the length of the Arsenal players' suspensions.

Rool and Lens defender Eric Sikora each received one-match suspensions after receiving their second yellow cards of the season.

Willi Reimann resigned as coach of the struggling Bundesliga club Nuremberg, saying he wanted to devote more time to caring for his ill wife.

The resignation came as a surprise, although the coach had come under fire since the club has gone six Bundesliga games without a win.

"My wife is seriously ill and she needs my care," Reimann said.

Reimann, 48, was fired from Wolfsburg last season and took over at Nuremberg shortly before the season. Nuremberg, with a long Bundesliga tradition, gained promotion this season.

"We have to accept his decision. It's especially tragic, because his wife is ill," Nuremberg president Michael Roth said.

Assistant coach Thomas Brunner will take over as head coach for the time being.

A German fourth division club have come up with an unusual plan to improve their promotion chances — signing up the entire Cuban national team.

Bonner SC, a small-time club in Germany's sedate seat of government, hopes to seal a cooperation agreement with the Cuban federation this week.

Under the scheme the Cubans would come to Bonn to benefit from German facilities and coaching. In return Bonner SC could field any of the Cuban players.

Bonner SC coach Rainer Thomas said club bosses came up with the idea after watching a video of Cuba playing Brazil earlier this year.

"We thought maybe we could bring one or two Cuban players to Germany," Thomas said.

"Things developed to the extent that the Cubans said an entire team would train here, gain playing experience here and play international games against other smaller nations." Thomas and club chairman Hans Viol planned to fly out to Cuba last Sunday and sign the cooperation agreement next week.

"The Cubans want to encourage football more and above all they want their national team in Europe to learn tactics," Viol told Bonn's General-Anzeiger newspaper. The paper ran its story under the headline "Cuban national team in Bonner SC shirts?"

But Thomas played down the idea that the Cubans would take over the entire first team.

"The chances of that are almost zero," he said. "I think too many players in my team are too good for that to happen." The deal still requires the blessing of German soccer authorities.

BIG MOUTH PLAYERS SLAMMED BY COACH

VfB Stuttgart coach Winfried Schaefer, under fire after a string of poor performances, on Wednesday denied reports that all his players wanted him to go and vowed to fight on.

"That's not true, it can't be," Schaefer said of a front-page story in the mass-circulation Bild newspaper saying a players' poll had voted unanimously, 25-0 against him.

"I'm not a victim of some campaign, I'm just a trainer," he added. "I'm still standing and I'll get through this."

Speculation about Schaefer's likely dismissal intensified after his men were crushed 3-0 by Bayern Munich in a German Cup quarter-final tie on Tuesday.

VfB Stuttgart, who reached the final of last season's European Cup Winners Cup, have not won in six games and are 10th in the Bundesliga.

For the game against Bayern, Schaefer left out Bulgarian playmaker Krassimir Balakov. Striker Fredi Bobic started on the bench and did not come on until the 57th minute.

"You do that with a 18-year-old but not with Fredi Bobic," the 27-year-old Bobic told German television after the match.

Schaefer defended his decision, saying: 'The problem in our team is that players talk into microphones without thinking about what they're going to say rather than taking a look at their performance on the field."

VAN GAAL HAS TILL CHRISSY TO SHAPE UP

Coach Louis Van Gaal's future at Barcelona appeared shaky with news reports saying he has been given until Christmas to solve the club's performance problems.

But Barcelona vice-president Joan Gaspart has been trying to restore calm, publicly denying that Van Gaal has been issued an ultimatum.

"Today he continues, but nobody know what's going to happen in the future," Gaspart was quoted as saying in the national daily El Periodico de Barcelona.

The latest rumors, coming after months of mediocre play, were triggered by the team's loss to Atletico de Madrid.

When a successfully converted penalty by Vladimir Jugovic of Atletico de Madrid rolled into the goal, the calls for Van Gaal's head grew louder. His contract expires in June 1999.

"Cornered" said a headline in the city's main sports daily, El Mundo Deportivo. The Barcelona-based national daily, El Periodico de Barcelona, ran a story headlined "Nunez, urges on Van Gaal," referring to Barcelona's chairman Josep Nunez's apparent message to Van Gaal to sort out the club quickly.

Barcelona, which with Atletico de Madrid pays the highest salaries in of Spanish clubs, started the year with irregular performances and has not been top of the League since this year's season started on August 30.

Barca's Enrique... he may have a new coach by Christmas.

Van Gaal's highly disciplined style of coaching is seen as less effective than that of a former coach Johan Cruyff, when stars such as Michael Laudrup brought success to the club.

Van Gaal has clinched some success for Barcelona, guiding them to the league championship last year and to the finals of the Spanish King's Cup.

COACHES TO SWAP POSTS?

Schalke, the 1997 UEFA Cup winner which has slid into the relegation zone of the Bundesliga after a string of poor results, received another setback with the news that libero Olaf Thon is probably out for the season.

The 32-year-old Schalke captain, who retired from the German national team after the World Cup, needs surgery for an Achilles' tendon injury.

"If he doesn't have surgery, he wouldn't be able to continue his career," Schalke coach Huub Stevens said.

Thon's surgery added to Schalke's injury misery and club officials said they would start looking for replacement players on the transfer market.

With three wins in 15 games, Schalke sank to 16th in the 18-team Bundesliga at the time of the injury.

Former Inter Milan coach Gigi Simoni could be given a chance to resume his career with Romanian club Rapid Bucharest.

Dinu Dragan, a Rapid Bucharest director, said that his club were interested in employing Simoni, who was earlier this week sacked by Inter Milan and replaced by Rapid's Mircea Lucescu.

Dragan said Rapid were interested in offering Simoni a contract until the end of the 1998-99 season.

"There are discussions already underway on this matter," Dragan said.

Businessman George Copos, Rapid Bucharest's major backer, has reportedly been talking to Inter president Massimo Moratti about the possibility of enticing Simoni to Romania.

Simoni, who had a contract with Inter until the end of the 1998-99 season, was Tuesday reported to be considering legal acation against the Italian side from wrongful dismissal.

Compiled by

EUROPE

Soccer Weekly

BATISTUTA'S WINNER IN SERIE A

Gabriel Batistuta's 16th season goal gave Fiorentina a hard-fought 1-0 victory against Bologna on Saturday and kept the Florentine team atop Serie A standings, three points ahead of AS Roma and Parma tied in second place.

Roma trounced Perugia 5-1 at home while Parma captured its first season victory on the road downing Sampdoria 2-0 in a night match at Genoa's Marassi stadium.

The three first division matches were played one day before the traditional Sunday schedule because of the UEFA Cup commitments of some Italian teams.

Batistuta, the leading league scorer, tallied the game winner in the 56th minute with a powerful free kick which sent the ball through the wall and into Bologna's net.

At Rome's Olympic stadium, Roma struck from a 0-1 deficit on a second-half spree by its young star-forwards Francesco Totti, Daniele Conti, Marco Delvecchio and Carmine Gautieri.

In Genoa, Italian striker Enrico Chiesa sank his former team scoring both Parma goals.

Batistuta, who has scored 12 goals in league matches and four in the Cups this season, extended Fiorentina's winning home streak to six games.

However victory of the League leader did not come without risks as Bologna produced at least three clear scoring chances with strikers Kennet Andersson and Beppe Signori. Their scoring attempts were bravely saved by Fiorentina's keeper Francesco Toldo.

When Toldo could not reach the ball, it was the post to stop a shot by Bologna's midfielder Joanathan Binotto, in the 51st minute.

With a record of 8-1-3 Fiorentina, coached by Giovanni Trapattoni and fielding such stars as Batistuta, Edmundo, Rui Costa and Luis Oliveira, piled up a commanding lead of 25 points.

Roma vaulted to 22 points for its sixth home victory at the Olympic stadium for an overall record of 6-4-2.

The Romans coming from a 3-3 draw with crosstown rival Lazio in the previous league match, wasted three scoring chances in the first 30 minutes of play and was punished on the first counter-attack by Perugia, in the 32nd.

Roma's keeper Antonio Chimenti fumbled the ball on a powerful drive by Croat forward Milan Rapajic who gave the visitors a 1-0 lead.

Perugia's Japanese striker Hidetoshi Nakata, who scored two spectacular goals in the previous round against Piacenza, wasted the opportunity to make it two by the end of the first half.

This was the end of Perugia's offensive as the visiting team had to play the entire second halfone player down following the expulsion of its captain-defender Salvatore Matrecano, who had overreacted on Brazilian Paulo Sergio.

Totti, the young talented captain of the Roman team, tallied the equalizer with a long-distance shot in the 61st.

Another young forward Conti, put Roma in front two minutes later.

Conti headed in his first Serie A goal on a perfect cross by Russian teammate Dmitri Alenichev.

The forward, the son of former Roma and national team star Bruno Conti, received a special applause by I Romani but his joy was short lived as he was sent off the field four minutes later for rough play.

Batistuta's winner for Fiorentina

With both teams down to 10 players, Roma kept pressing on the attack and its agile forward Delvecchio scored twice in two minutes (77th and 79th) with precise headers to make it 4-1.

Gautieri's goal came in second half injury time, to make Roma the highest scoring Serie A team with 25 goals in 12 rounds.

Batistuta's goal improved Fiorentina's tally to 23.

Batistuta and Edmundo carried out some impressive combinations against Bologna, but the Brazilian striker was inaccurate close to the net.

Parma, which routed AC Milan 4-0 the week before, gave La Samp its first home loss this season and tied Roma at 22 points.

Chiesa, fed by Dino Baggio, scored Parma's first goal with a precise header from a few meters in the 44th minute.

French world champion Lilian Thuram set up Chiesa second goal with a perfect pass deep into the penalty area.

Chiesa outdribbled goalie Fabrizio Ferron and kicked into the open goalmouth in the first minute of the second half.

The match between defending league champion Juventus and Lazio of Rome was the big match among the six scheduled on Sunday.

See page 24 for the results.

Third-placed Lokeren slipped back in the Belgian title race when they lost 2-1 at Ghent on Saturday.

Heavy snow forced the postponement of two Belgian first division matches on Saturday and the four games that did go ahead were played in poor conditions.

Lokeren went ahead with a 13th minute goal by Czech striker Jan Koeller but within four minutes, Ghent were on level terms with a goal by Mahammed Barka.

Ghent took the lead after 30 minutes with a goal from Sandy Martens and held on for a win which vaulted them up to sixth place in the table. Lokeren stay third.

Lokeren's defeat played into the hands of Belgian champions Club Bruges, who opened a six-point lead at the top of the table with a 2-1 win at Westerlo on Friday.

BARCELONA LOSES AGAIN

Mallorca climbed two points clear at the top of the Spanish first division on Saturday as champions Barcelona slipped to their third successive defeat and other leading teams dropped points.

Hector Cuper's Mallorca grounded out a 1-0 victory over Real Betis thanks to a goal eight minutes from the end by Dani Garcia. Deportivo Coruna piled the pressure on Barca coach Louis van Gaal as they snatched a last-gasp 2-1 victory at home to the Catalans.

With Celta Vigo held 1-1 at Salamanca, Atletico Madrid drawing 0-0 at home to Athletic Bilbao and Real Madrid contesting a drab 0-0 draw with Espanyol, Mallorca are leading the standings on 25 points from 13 games.

Deportivo moved up to second on 23. Celta Vigo are third on 22, Atletico Madrid a point further back and perennial favorites Real Madrid and Barcelona on 19 points with three other clubs.

Van Gaal will once again be facing crisis talk in the media after another shoddy performance against Deportivo.

The Catalans were second best in a first half that, but for poor finishing, would have seen Deportivo home and dry.

Van Gaal's side were second to every ball in midfield and even the introduction of Pep Guardiola on 60 minutes, after more than 10 months out injured, failed to improve matters.

Deportivo took the lead on 76 minutes as Mustapha Hadji smacked home from close range after a hopeful cross from the left evaded a static Barcelona defense.

The visitors were offered a lifeline as striker Patrick Kluivert won a debatable penalty after 88 minutes when he fell awkwardly in the box.

Rivaldo sent Jacques Songo'o the wrong way with his spot kick but Barcelona found time once again to be caught sleeping at the back.

Real's Raul against Espanyol on the weekend. It ended 0-0.

Turu Flores, breaking forward on the right, sent over a cross-shot that should have been comfortably dealt with.

But three defenders on the line failed to clear and local hero Fran Gonzalez popped up unmarked to score an injury-time winner.

In Saturday's other game, Real Sociedad strolled to a 2-0 win over struggling Extremadura.

LEVERKUSEN'S MR SEXY LIFTS THEM TO SECOND

Ulf Kirsten, recently voted German's sexiet player, was in fine form on the weekend, scoring twice from short-range, as Bayer Leverkusen won to climb past Bayern Munich to the head of the Bundesliga table.

Leverkusen, red-hot with a 13-match unbeaten run that has yielded 28 points, trounced sixth-place VfL Wolfsburg 3-0 to move past Munich on goal differential.

The victory left the two powerhouses deadlocked at 35 points and headed to a showdown next Sunday in Munich's Olympiastadium.

"Our victory was good for the league because there's drama again at the top," said Leverkusen coach Christoph Daum, who had publicly written off the title earlier in the season when Munich was a runaway leader.

Leverkusen weathered an opening blitz from visiting Wolfsburg, riding a nine-match unbeaten streak of its own, before the bullish Kirsten's skill inside the box turned around the match.

The striker, the Bundesliga's leading marksman the past two seasons, again grabbed a share of the league lead at nine goals with his chip in the 21st minute and header off a corner five minutes later.

Brazilian midfielder Ze Roberto scored in the 54th minute as Leverkusen's mix of Brazilians and talented young German players proved too clever for Wolfsburg.

U.S. international Claudio Reyna reclaimed his starting role for Wolfsburg for the match. But his team, after some sparkling play during the first 20 minutes, faded against the aggressive style of Leverkusen, which tops the table for the first time in two years.

Munich helped Leverkusen by being held to a surprie 2-2 draw Friday by SC Freiburg. Hansa Rostock and FC Nuremberg also played to 2-2.

Snow cancelled three matches Saturday, but VfB Stuttgart won for the first time in six matches by beating Hamburg 3-0. The team's coach, Winfried Schaefer, had resigned Friday in the face of a player rebellion.

Nigerian striker Jonathan Akpoborie scored a hat trick, leaving him with eight season goals, as Stuttgart erased Hamburg's early lead on a 37th minute goal by Bernd Hollerbach.

Schalke, the 1997 UEFA Cup champions, moved out of the relegation zone with a 2-1 away victory against Eintracht Frankfurt. Marco van Hoogdalem and Sven Kmetsch scored first-half goals.

Wolfsburg's Akonner (ground) against Bayer Leverkusen on Saturday.

Schalke got a lift when striker Marc Wilmonts played his first match in two months after injury.

The Belgium international was the hero of their UEFA Cup triumph. Jan-Age Fjoertoff, a new acquisition, scored Frankfurt's consolation goal in the 80th minute.

Hundreds of fans rampaged Saturday before and after a Greek league match between defending champion Olympiakos and archrival Panathinaikos.

Private Mega television showed fans smashing cars, attacking police and ripping up seats inside Athens' Olympic Stadium.

At least 10 people were injured in the violence, including a police motorcycle officer and passengers in a taxi who were pulled out and beaten while the cab was smashed and looted, reports said.

No arrests were reported.

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DIG0115

Compiled by UK Soccer Weekly

CRAIG WILSON'S UK WORLD

When you hand over your cash at the weekend, think yourself lucky. To watch their teams on the paddock, the Poms pay around three times the price of an Ericsson Cup ticket. And this is just the average price — attend a Premiership game and you'll need to take out a second home loan.

The cheapest seat at Manchester United will set you back $48, West Ham will hammer you for $66, and the best Premiership deal is at Wimbledon — who are so desperate to get bums on seats that they'll sell you one for $42.

Cheaper turnstiles are at St. Johnstone ($15) in Scotland, while England's glory is Colchester ($18). The Welsh wizards of Cardiff can be seen for the magical price of $12. And the best bargain in British footy? Head for Stoke City. A new stadium, some of the best food in the Football League, top of the table soccer — and all for $36.

What would you do if you won Oz Lotto? When Mark Gardiner won $33 million on the British National Lottery, he spent $900 000 on Hastings Town FC.

Having previously been a fan of (very) near neighbours St. Leonards, he'd been involved in their transfer of Sasa Ilic to Charlton, but was unhappy at the way things were run. So, having taken over at Hastings, how has the footy mad millionaire spent his winnings ?

A rebuild of both team and stadium are under way, the club are sitting near the top of the Dr. Martens League, and Gardiner has brought in players from nearby Brighton — only two divisions above them. Furthermore, he seems set on upsetting his former mates at St. Leonards. As if to prove he can mix it with the big boys, he is currently proposing a merger with his neighbours, who, having been relegated from the DM League last season, would probably be the minor partner.

Adding insult to injury, at the end of last season Gardiner took a bus load of supporters to the derby game between the two clubs.

Picking them up at the Hastings ground, he dropped them off at St. Leonards. It must have been the shortest away trip on record. The grounds are 50 metres apart.

Northern strugglers Burnley have banned sales of Snickers bars from their Turf Moor stadium. The Clarets saw red when choccy manufacturers Mars ran a World Cup Competition on their wrappers.

Losing lolly-lovers were told "Sorry, you haven't won a prize this time. But things could be worse. You could play for Burnley — their fans turned their backs on the team for five minutes to protest at their poor form".

In fact, the 1996 protest was directed at the Board of the club, who are not pleased at being reminded of the incident. Snickers have been withdrawn from the ground, and a local paper reports that nearby shops are following suit.

"This is a sick joke" newsagent Ken Preston told 'The Sun'. "I've removed my Snickers and I'm sure all true Burnley fans will do likewise".

Gifted midfielder Lee Clark recently starred on Sky TV's 'Soccer AM', outlining his affection for Newcastle United. After prattling on at length about the Magpies, he continued by saying that if it meant saving them from relegation, he'd be only too willing to put the ball into his own net.

Such an admission is bad enough at the best of times. But fans at his new club are certainly not pleased.

Clark is now at Sunderland, the Magpies' arch-rivals, and supporters are hoping that if Sunderland face Newcastle in any crunch games, Clark is left on the bus.

(With thanks to Four Four Two, The Tea Party fanzine, A Love Supreme fanzine)

SPURS IN SEMIS; SUNDERLAND'S DREAM RUN CONTINUES

Chris Armstrong's two goals and a spectacular strike by David Ginola fired Tottenham to a 3-1 victory over Manchester United Wednesday as Spurs made it to the semi-final of the League Cup by beating a United line-up missing nine rested stars.

With his team facing Premier League leader Aston Villa then Bayern Munich in the final round of Champions League group games tomorrow night (Wed), United manager Alex Ferguson left out many of his starters. Only Gary Neville and Nicky Butt started even though there was a return after a long injury of Ryan Giggs.

After a goal-less first half at White Hart Lane, Armstrong fired Spurs ahead three minutes into the second half.

The second goal came seven minutes when Ginola sent over a cross from the left and Armstrong left his marker to steer the ball home.

United hit back when former Spurs striker Teddy Sheringham headed a goal in the 71st minute.

But Ginola made sure United was ousted from the competition when he collected the ball two metres outside the area and fired home five minutes from the end.

In another quarter-final, Leicester, who won the title two seasons ago, downed Blackburn Rovers 1-0. Neil Lennon netted the winner in the 67th minute with a downward header from Robbie Savage's cross.

The other quarter-finals saw Wimbledon downing defending champs Chelsea 2-1 and Sunderland, the Division One leader, overwhelmed Division Two Luton 3-0.

Sunderland versus Luton in the quarter-finals.

Argentine defender Mauricio Taricco's 1.75 million pounds (US$2.91 million) transfer from Ipswich Town to English premier league side Tottenham Hotspur was finally completed midweek.

The move had been on hold for a month after the player injured his ankle in his last match for first division Ipswich. Taricco is George Graham's first signing as Tottenham coach.

SOAPIE STAR FULFILS AMBITION

Former television soap star Bill Kenwright has begun his bid to raise the 48 million pounds he believes will make his childhood dream come true.

The new Everton deputy chairman is planning to raise enough cash to buy the 68 per cent shareholding in the club held by former chairman Peter Johnson, who resigned.

Kenwright, once a leading actor in the long-running Coronation Street and now a theatre impresario, tried to buy the club four years ago with a five-million pound bid. He was beaten to the chairman's seat by Johnson's 20 million-pound offer.

With Johnson now willing to sell his shares, Kenwright is keen to complete his dream of owning the club he loves and he has already set up talks with financial backers in a bid to raise money.

"My previous bid included everything I owned, including my house. I realise now it may take 10 times that figure but I would hate to be in a position were I am not able to get in the first bid," he said.

Kenwright has already spoken to Everton director Lord Grantchester, the grandson of former club owner and football pools tycoon Sir John Moores, and plans talks with other, unnamed money men.

He has not ruled out asking a media group to help fund the bid, although this would not be popular with the Everton supporters. If Kenwright is successful in buying out Johnson he plans to keep chairman Sir Phillip Carter in his current role.

Carter, who guided Everton to their most successful period in the eighties, took over from Johnson in a bid to steady the club after Johnson's reign.

Steve McManaman has played down speculation linking him with a move abroad by stressing his commitment to English Premiership outfit Liverpool.

Spanish giants Real Madrid and Barcelona have both been linked with the England midfielder who could seal himself a lucrative move under the Bosman ruling after his contract expires at the end of the season.

But the 26-year-old England star stressed that he wanted to help bring the glory days back to Anfield.

"People keep linking me with clubs but the position is that I am under contract to Liverpool," he said.

"It is the only club I've ever played for and I am still hoping we can sort out a deal for when my contract expires at the end of the season.

"If not then I will be able to talk to other clubs but until then I'm totally committed to Liverpool.

"It is still my great ambition to see them back to the place they held in the British game in the 70s and 80s.

"I want to emulate those players I watched as a kid - Phil Neal, Phil Thompson and Graeme Souness - and win medals. Then I want to win them again and again."

McManaman also denied suggestions that he was greedily holding clubs to ransom over his signature.

"I've seen figures bandied about that are ridiculous. If anyone sat down and analysed what I am supposed to be demanding, they would realise that," he said.

Rangers are poised to sell outcast striker Marco Negri back to Italy, according to Scottish newspaper reports.

Serie A clubs Perugia, who sold Negri to Rangers in 1997, and Bologna have both contacted the Scottish club about the 28-year-old forward, the Daily Record reported.

Rangers want 3 million pounds for the man who hit 32 league goals last season but has not played at all this season because of a dispute with coach Dick Adovcaat and chairman David Murray.

Because of Negri's refusual to play for the Glasgow club he has lost more than 200,000 pounds in wages.

The Italian transfer window opens up in January, but Bologna and Perguia are anxious to conclude a deal now for the striker who scored 15 times in Serie A in 1996-97.

CONLICT OF INTEREST FOR SPURS DIRECTOR

Sam Chisholm resigned as a director of Tottenham after his role as an adviser to the Premier League came under attack from other clubs.

A statement issued by Tottenham said Chisholm, the former head of BSkyB who is credited with revolutionising football by securing the Sky deal, had decided to step down after being appointed as a consultant to the Premier League to advise on television contracts.

The appointment attracted criticism from clubs who claimed there was a clear conflict of interest with his role as a non-executive director of Spurs and his new position with the league.

Spurs chairman Alan Sugar had appointed Chisholm to the Spurs board earlier this year to advise the club on television developments.

Newcastle chief executive Freddie Fletcher tabled a resolution for today's meeting of Premier League chairmen to discuss the matter. The statement followed that meeting.

Under the Premier League's constitution no employee of, nor consultant to, the Premier League can be a director of a Premier League club.

Compiled by UK Soccer Weekly

GEORGE GRAHAM'S SON ASSAULTED

Arsenal expressed regret on Saturday after a supporter reportedly assaulted the son of former manager George Graham, now boss of their north London arch-rivals Tottenham Hotspur.

"The club does not condone mindless violence and is therefore terribly disappointed to hear that one of our supporters is suspected of this regrettable incident," the premier league club said in a statement.

Newspapers had earlier reported that Daniel Graham, 25, was beaten around the head with a snooker cue by a shaven-headed man in a crowded pub on Thursday night while drinking with former Arsenal midfielder Paul Davis.

He was taken to hospital for stitches.

"The guy seemed miffed about George going from Arsenal and ending up at Tottenham," the Sun quoted a witness as saying.

The Mirror quoted a witness, who did not want to be identified, as saying the man hurled abuse at Graham and then left the pub before returning with the cue.

"He walked straight up to the table where Daniel and Paul were sitting and cracked Daniel over the head with all his might. He hit him from the front right between the eyes.

"Daniel was not knocked out but he was a bit groggy. There was blood pouring down his face onto his shirt."

Graham won six trophies with Arsenal but was sacked in February 1995 after allegations that he had received an illegal payment as part of a transfer deal.

Neither Graham, father or son, had any comment.

John Gregory is ready to ask for more money in the quest to keep the Championship screws on Manchester United.

Gregory has already spent £21million on Dion Dublin, Paul Merson, Alan Thompson and Steve Watson to help put Aston Villa on the Premiership summit — and he wants to add another top-line star early in the New Year.

Motherwell postponed their Scottish premier league match against Dundee on Saturday after the death of a teenage player.

The club said it ordered the postponement of the game at Fir Park as a mark of respect for 19-year-old striker Andy Thomson, who collapsed and died on Friday.

PREMIER LEADING SCORERS

Owen (Liverpool) 12, **Ricard** (Middlesbrough) 12, **Yorke** (Man Utd) 12, **Dublin** (Aston Villa) 11 (4 for Coventry), **Blake** (Blackburn) 10 (9 or Bolton), **Fowler** (Liverpool) 9, **Cole** (Man Utd) 9, **Hasselbaink** (Leeds) 8, **Shearer** (Newcastle) 8, **Poyet** (Chelsea) 8, **Anelka** (Arsenal) 7, **Zola** (Chelsea), **Ferguson** (Newcastle) 7 (5 for Everton), **Gayle** (Wimbledon) 7, **Cottee** (Leicester) 7.

DIVISION ONE

Hughes (West Brom) 22, **Aloisi** (Portsmouth) 17, **Ward** (Barnsley) 15, **Gunnlaugsson** (Bolton) 14, **Bellamy** (Norwich) 14, **Onuora** (Swindon) 11, **Johnson** (Ipswich) 11, **Scowcroft** (Ipswich) 11, **Stewart** (Huddersfield) 11, **Irons** (Tranmere) 11, **Mills** (Bradford) 10, **Bridges** (Sunderland) 10, **Roberts** (Norwich) 10, **Saunders** (Sheff Utd) 10, **Akinbiyi** (Bristol City) 10.

NEW BLACKBURN BOSS PRAISES FERGUSON

Former Manchester United assistant manager Brian Kidd paid glowing tribute to ex-boss Alex Ferguson when he was formally introduced by Blackburn Rovers as their new manager on Saturday.

Kidd on Thursday ended seven increasingly successful years as Ferguson's right-hand man at Old Trafford to take over from Roy Hodgson at Blackburn, who are bottom of the 20-team English premier league.

"I can't express in words what Alex Ferguson has been to me," Kidd said at a news conference on Saturday a few hours before Blackburn's home league game against Charlton.

"The responsibility he has given me over the years has become more and more. It was not easy leaving United. It was emotional saying goodbye because it has been a great part of my life."

Kidd said there was only one reason he had left the Old Trafford club and that was "to pursue my career in football."

Ferguson said earlier on BBC television that United would be taking their time over naming a replacement.

"There won't be anything done in a hurry," he said. "It is an important role, particularly with the size of the job here."

Alex Ferguson ... praised by Brian Kidd.

NON-LEAGUE YEOVIL IN FA CUP UPSET

The demise of runaway Second Division leaders Stoke and non-league Yeovil's win over Northampton provided the main upsets in the second-round of the FA Cup.

A single goal from Division Three side Swansea's Richard Appleby four minutes before half-time was enough to condemn Brian Little's Stoke to defeat.

Northampton could not get to grips with the contours of Yeovil's Huish Park and went down 2-0 to goals from Steve Thompson (14) and Warren Patmore (82).

Yeovil's head coach Colin Lippiatt saluted his side after they captured their 18th League scalp in the FA Cup.

"My team really showed character. They worked hard for this result and I thought they deserved it," Lippiatt said.

"I have eight players out through injury and we missed our chances. But Yeovil won it in the first 25 minutes when they really came at us," Northampton's manager Ian Atkins said.

Second division Luton Town, meanwhile, were beaten on their home patch by Hull, who are currently propping up the whole of the Football League as the bottom club in Division Three.

The day's other Cup fall guys were Mansfield, who have been in good form in Division Three but could not beat Southport Field Mill, where a penalty from David Gamble (25) and a second goal from Brian Ross just after the break brought the non-leaguers a 2-1 win.

Eyal Berkovic has written a letter in support of West Ham teammate John Hartson, who faces a misconduct charge after kicking him in the head during a training session.

"There is and has been no ill feeling between John Hartson and me," he wrote in a signed letter which was obtained and published by the Mirror newspaper on Saturday.

"We have and have had a normal relationship between members of the same squad, and have played in the same team and practiced together on many occasions since then."

Hartson kicked Berkovic during a routine training session in September as the Israeli kneeled on the ground after a hard tackle. The incident was filmed and images were subsequently published and broadcast worldwide.

The letter published on Saturday painted a very different picture to the one that first emerged.

At the time, Berkovic was quoted as saying he was considering his future at the English Premier League club.

He wrote in a newspaper column about how the blood had gushed from his head after the incident and of the anger he felt for his teammate and employers.

"If my head had been a ball, it would have whizzed into the stanchions from his kick," he wrote in an Israeli tabloid, dismissing Hartson's subsequent attempt to apologize by telephone as a "bit late for that now."

However, West Ham manager Harry Redknapp said afterward that both men had settled their differences and shaken hands.

Berkovic confirmed in the letter that was the case and had asked Redknapp not to fine Hartson because he had accepted his teammate's apologies for the kick.

"We both put the incident down to our training hard at the time," Berkovic wrote.

The English Football Association (F.A.) charged Hartson, who faces a lengthy ban, with misconduct in October but no date has yet been set for any disciplinary hearing where the letter is expected to be produced.

West Ham is currently well-placed in the Premier League and need both players as they chase a place in Europe.

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Compiled by **UK** Soccer Weekly's Daryl Katz

KIDD STARTS WITH WIN

Brian Kidd began his managerial reign at Blackburn Rovers with a win on Saturday as he saw his new charges secure a 1-0 win over Charlton Athletic at Ewood Park.

Kidd suffered a setback even before kickoff as goalkeeper, Aussie JohnFilan, was ruled out with concussion, third-choice Alan Fettis coming into the side.

Rovers went straight onto the attack and Kevin Gallacher directed a Damien Johnson pass just wide of the Charlton goal before Sasa Ilic saved well at his near post from Nathan Blake's header.

Charlton came back and Fettis dropped down well to save a free-kick from Paul Mortimer. Neil Redfearn should have given the visitors the lead in the13th minute but with only Fettis to beat, he knocked the ball beyond the post.

Kidd was supposed to be taking a back seat at his first Rovers game, but after 16 minutes he could restrain himself no longer and moved to the touchline to bark out orders.

A poor first half saw few clear chances, although Nathan Blake might have secured the lead for Rovers but could not control the ball six yards out.

Kidd replaced the injured Gallacher with Kevin Davies four minutes before the break.

The game hardly improved in the second half. Redfearn went close again for the Addicks from a free kick in the 50th minute after he played a one-two with Andy Hunt and forced a good save from Fettis.

Richard Rufus gave Rovers a scare when he headed just wide from six yards out. Christian Dailly then slipped to let in substitute Shaun Newton on the right and he picked out Redfearn, whose header was saved by Fettis.

Blake was just inches away from giving Blackburn the lead in the 62nd minute when he rose well to head just wide from a Damien Duff left-wing cross.

The breakthrough for Rovers came 14 minutes from time. David Dunn ran at the Charlton defence and when he was tackled the ball fell to Davies, who unleashed a shot which seemed to go right through Ilic.

The goal was the first for the former Southampton striker at his new club and his first premiership goal since January, his poor form one of the factors that contributed to the sacking of former manager Roy Hodgson.

Three minutes later Davies might have had a second but he sliced a right-footed shot well wide. Blake went close before Dailly had an effort disallowed as Rovers finally came to life.

Charlton pressured Rovers in the final minutes as they searched for an equaliser to ease their own relegation fears, but the goal would not come.

At the final whistle, a jubilant Kidd raised his arms in celebration and congratulated each of his players as they left the pitch.

Leeds have produced some fine performances in recent weeks and secured another impressive win at Elland Road on Saturday, defeating high-flying West Ham United 4-0.

Lee Bowyer scored twice as manager David O'Leary continued his successful spell since taking over the position from Tottenham-bound George Graham.

O'Leary has put his faith in the talented youth at Elland Road and for the first time this season his starting lineup contained six players under the age of 21, including the exciting 18-year-old Alan Smith.

Goalkeeper Paul Robinson, just 19, found himself largely unoccupied throughout as his teammates swamped West Ham. After Frank Lampard whistled a 25-yard free-kick inches past Robinson's right-hand post it was all Leeds, with Bowyer pulling the strings in midfield.

The opening goal followed an error by West Ham's Chilean international Javier Margas. The defender played a straight ball out of defence into the path of Bowyer who fired a 20-yard curling shot into the bottom left corner beyond Shaka Hislop.

Five minutes later a flicked cross from Alfie Haaland picked out Bowyer, whose header forced Hislop into a full-stretch save. Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink rattled the side-netting from the rebound.

Just after the half-hour Bowyer had another chance to make it two as a goalbound right-foot shot was cleared off the line by Stan Lazaridis, who repeated the trick moments later to deny Haaland.

Hislop produced another stunning save to deny 20-year-old Ian Harte from 25 yards, while Smith's rising drive from inside the box just cleared the bar.

Hislop thwarted Harry Kewell shortly after the break, but Leeds grabbed a deserved second just after the hour when Bowyer unleashed another fierce shot from the edge of the West Ham area.

Robert Molenaar wrapped up the points when he drove home the third in the 68th minute for his second of the season.

After the dismissal of Neil Ruddock in the 71st minute following a high challenge on Kewell, Hasselbaink completed the rout, rifling home a 20-yard drive for his sixth goal in five games.

The result leaves West Ham still searching for their first league win at Elland Road since 1978.

Leicester City returned to winning ways on Saturday, strolling to a 2-0 victory over struggling Southampton at Filbert Street.

The home side dominated the first half, but some poor finishing meant that the game remained goalless at the break.

Emile Heskey should have done better after just three minutes when he powered a header wide of goal from Steve Guppy's perfect cross.

Muzzy Izzet should then have given Leicester the advantage, but after showing Carlton Palmer a clean pair of heels, his final touch let him down on the edge of the area.

The home fans were left empty-handed again after referee Dermot Gallagher waved away a penalty appeal following a Scott Hiley clearance in the 17th minute.

Nine minutes later Neil Lennon forced a great save from Southampton goalkeeper Paul Jones when he completed a neat triangular passing move involving himself, Izzet and Matt Elliott with a powerful 18-yard drive.

Before the break Leicester again appealed for a penalty, this time against Francis Benali, but again Gallagher was unimpressed.

Southampton appeared to have weathered the storm but were hit by a Leicester blitz just after the hour.

In the 61st minute, as Southampton appealed for offside, Lennon found Heskey in the Southampton area. The striker collected easily and rounded Jones unchallenged to score his eighth goal of the season.

Just two minutes later, Leicester assumed full control of the game. Palmer was adjudged to have fouled Izzet on the right hand edge of the area. Guppy swung over the free kick but Jones failed to punch clear under the combined challenge of Elliott and Walsh.

The ball hit the veteran defender on the back of his shoulder and dropped past an embarrassed Jones.

Matt Le Tissier squandered a good opportunity 17 minutes from time when he collected a pass from Egil Ostenstad. He teed the ball up well, but blasted over from just six yards out.

Leicester coasted to victory and could have had another goal six minutes from time but Elliot directed his header over the bar.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Up to and including Sunday, December 6

	Pts
Aston Villa	30
Manchester United	29
Leeds United	26
Arsenal	26
West Ham United	26
Chelsea	25
Middlesbrough	24
Wimbledon	23
Liverpool	22
Derby County	22
Tottenham Hotspur	22
Leicester City	21
Newcastle United	20
Everton	19
Sheffield Wednesday	16
Charlton Athletic	16
Coventry City	15
Blackburn Rovers	12
Nottingham Forest	11
Southampton	10

GUNNERS FAIL TO FIRE

Champions Arsenal continued to struggle through their difficult spell when they laboured to a dour goalless draw against Jim Smith's Derby County a Pride Park on Saturday.

The depleted double winners never looked like title material against Derby, who had the better of an encounter which started brightly but faded rapidly after half-time.

Arsenal last won on November 8 and have now scored just one goal in their last seven outings.

Derby are still some way short of the impressive form they showed last season, but produced better football on the day.

Stefano Eranio made his first start for six weeks and he was lively throughout, prompting and probing and sending a chip tamely wide after combining well with Paulo Wanchope.

The Costa Rican posed the greatest threat however, wasting two glorious close-range chances and seeing a 22-yard drive beaten away by David Seaman.

Lars Bohinen sent a vicious drive inches wide but for all the County pressure, Arsenal had their fair share of chances in a lively first-half.

Nicolas Anelka saw his low angled drive pushed wide by Derby goalkeeper Mart Poom, who also bundled a Marc Overmars shot past the post after the tricky winger beat Bohinen.

Poom excelled himself four minutes before the break, racing off his line to block a Ray Parlour shot with his legs after the midfielder had been set free by Overmars.

The match quickly degenerated after half-time, neither side capable of producing incisive or flowing football.

Lee Dixon and Parlour were well off target with early long-range efforts and Remi Garde crossed straight at Poom with Arsenal players queuing up at the back post.

Derby were little better, Horacio Carbonari heading Tony Dorigo's deep corner narrowly over and a Jacob Laursen free-kick comfortably gathered by Seaman as the match drifted towards the inevitable goalless conclusion.

Chelsea found themselves held to the same scoreline by an improving Everton side in a controversial clash at Goodison Park.

Dennis Wise was sent off for the third time this season and Everton were themselves reduced to 10 men in the second half following the dismissal of their young Irish defender Richard Dunne.

Chelsea defended well to cope with the loss of Wise and stretched their unbeaten league run to 13 matches, their best for ten years.

Walter Smith's young and enthusiastic Everton side played some good passing football, their best early chance falling to Ibrahima Bakayoko who lashed a 30-yard drive inches wide.

Cadamarteri wasted a gift chance when a fine pass from Michael Ball put him clear in the box, but he rushed his shot and sent it wide. Soon after he surged through the middle, but with Bakayoko in acres of space to his right, chose to shoot and wasted the opening.

Chelsea made few inroads, but Roberto Di Matteo produced a fine low drive from 25 yards, which Thomas Myhre saved at full stretch.

Chelsea lost Poyet after 31 minutes following a touchline challenge by Alex Cleland, Michael Duberry coming on as substitute.

Referee Gary Willard then became the central figure when he stunned Chelsea by sending off Wise following another late challenge on Materazzi.

Everton dominated long spells of the second period, with Ball, Materazzi and Cadamarteri wasting glorious chances. Leboeuf was magnificent at the back for Chelsea however, and the Everton chances slowly dried up.

The Londoners actually came closest to scoring when a deflected Di Matteo drive beat Myhre, only for the ball to come back off the upright.

Everton found themselves down to ten men with 14 minutes remaining when Dunne fouled Tore Andre Flo to earn a second yellow card.

Flo produced two late efforts but could not find the goal and both managers had to be content to take a single point from the match.

KILLIE CLOSES IN ON BIG GUNS

Kilmarnock drew level with Glasgow Rangers at the top of the Scottish premier league on Saturday with a 4-0 victory over Aberdeen at Rugby Park.

They now have 31 points from 17 games, equal with Rangers who have played one game fewer.

Ally Mitchell scored twice, the first in the sixth minute when he pounced after Jim Leighton touched Jerome Vareille's header onto the bar, and then rifling in Vareille's cutback in the 34th minute.

Four minutes later, Frenchman Vareille scored himself and then former Aberdeen striker Paul Wright netted a 66th minute penalty after Gary Holt had been brought down by Gary Smith.

Kilmarnock visit Glasgow next week to meet Rangers, but Williamson is undaunted.

"It is a big game but I feel we have a good squad now, and the good thing is that most of them are Scots. Our players tend to get a bad press but I had 10 good Scots out there and one good Frenchman," he said.

Aberdeen are now stranded at the bottom with just 14 points and there is growing pressure on manager Alex Miller to resign.

Dunfermline shocked Rangers at Ibrox ahead of their UEFA Cup tie with Parma in Italy on Tuesday when Stewart Petrie netted a 76th minute equaliser.

Giovanni van Bronckhorst put Rangers in front with a stunning 20-metre drive in the 16th minute and later coach Dick Advocaat said the result was a travesty of justice.

"We controlled 90 minutes of the game and couldn't take our chances. They had one present from us and scored," he said.

Dundee United drew 1-1 at home to St Johnstone. Billy Dodds gave them a 52nd minute lead with his ninth goal of the season but Roddy Grant equalised with a penalty four minutes later.

SCOTTISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Up to and including Sunday, December 6

	Pts
Rangers	31
Kilmarnock	31
Celtic	26
St Johnstone	24
Heart of Midlothian	22
Dundee	19
Dundee United	18
Motherwell	18
Dunfermline Athletic	15
Aberdeen	14

Compiled and written by Daryl Katz

UK

English Premier highlights

VILLA V MAN UTD

Julian Jochim celebrates Villa's goal....yessssssssssss.

Aston Villa retained top spot in the premiership for another week as they held off the challenge of Manchester United at Villa Park on Saturday in a hard-fought but scrappy 1-1 draw.

Dwight Yorke returned to a hostile reception at his former club, but looked out of sorts and failed to produce the match winning performance he undoubtedly desired.

The first half of this vital encounter hardly lived up to the pre-match billing. The home side started better and caused some anxious moments for the United defence through the aerial power of Dion Dublin and the pace of Julian Joachim.

The two strikers linked well after eight minutes, but the ball ran along the United six yard line with nobody available to apply a finishing touch.

United then threatened briefly themselves, but Yorke badly mishit a shot after combining with strike partner Andy Cole.

Villa targeted Dublin early, clearly attempting to expose a United defence that has leaked goals in recent matches.

After 20 minutes Lee Hendrie sent over a swerving corner. Peter Schmeichel tried to gather but missed and Ugo Ehiogu headed narrowly wide when well placed to give his side the lead.

A period of sustained Villa pressure followed as the game heated up and midfielder Ian Taylor headed high and wide just a minute later. Taylor and Lee Hendrie then contrived to interfere with one another in the United penalty area and in so doing provided Schmeichel with a chance to scramble the ball clear.

As the half wore on, United began to string their passes together and after 26 minutes Cole forced Villa to clear the ball off their line when his header from a corner beat Villa goalkeeper Michael Oakes.

United battled to assert themselves as Villa proved difficult to break down. Just after the half hour Denis Irwin found Cole with a left-wing cross but the striker put his shot way wide.

United finished the half the better side, Jesper Blomqvist and Irwin threatening down the left and Paul Scholes doing some enterprising work through the middle, but could not find an effective final ball.

David Beckham tried a trademark shot from range just before the break but Oakes saved easily.

United caught Villa cold just 90 seconds into the second half, taking the lead with a goal that seemed to increase the intensity of the contest.

Andy Cole crossed from the right, and while Oakes managed to parry the shot away from lurking halftime substitute Ryan Giggs, Scholes followed up to place his shot firmly across goal and into the net.

Villa have shown their resilience in recent weeks and were desperate to emerge with something from this game to prove that they can live with the best that the premiership has to offer.

The reply was not long in coming. Just nine minutes into the half, the enterprising Joachim shot from 20 yards and the ball took a deflection off Irwin to loop over a stranded Schmeichel and into the net.

Both sides increased the tempo and United countered immediately in an attempt to restore their lead. Villa had the bit between their teeth by now however, and just before the hour Joachim unleashed another cracking shot from 20 yards which flashed just wide of Schmeichel's left hand post.

Four minutes later Gary Neville brought down Alan Thompson just outside the penalty area and the midfielder stepped up to hit a cracking free kick which cannoned away off the upright before Schmeichel had a chance to move.

Aston Villa were buzzing now and forced a series of corners in a spell of pressure which saw the United defence scrambling to keep them out, the best chance falling again to Ehiogu.

With 20 minutes remaining Alex Ferguson sacrificed the industrious Andy Cole and replaced him with Nicky Butt in a bid to inject additional strength and tenacity into a struggling United midfield.

The move paid dividends as United largely halted the Villa momentum as well as launching some attacks of their own.

The winning goal would not come though, both sides having to be satisfied with a point from a game which never rose to any great heights.

United perhaps had their eye on Wednesday's champions league group decider against Bayern Munich and lacked the fluency that has characterised their play for much of the season.

John Gregory saw his side stand firm in the face of the team who have set the standard throughout the decade, and will now look to his forthcoming matches against the other title contenders with some confidence.

SPURS V LIVERPOOL

(r to l) Phil Babb, Danny Murphy and Les Ferdinand.

George Graham's Tottenham Hotspur claimed another big scalp on Saturday with a 2-1 triumph over a struggling Liverpool team at White hart lane.

Spurs continued their resurgence, the pace and aerial dominance of striker Chris Armstrong proving a major threat once again.

Ruel Fox struck the opening blow after 25 minutes when his shot took a cruel deflection off Robbie Fowler to give Tottenham a deserved lead.

Norwegian striker Steffen Iversen left the field with a facial injury after 33 minutes, but the appearance of Les Ferdinand as substitute hardly diluted the Tottenham supremacy up front.

Czech international Patrik Berger missed an opportunity to bring Liverpool back into the game when he fired wildly over the bar after a penetrating run through the inside left channel.

Four minutes after the break, Spurs doubled their advantage courtesy of a Jamie Carragher own goal and it seemed they might coast to an easy victory.

However, when a brilliant Berger free kick flashed home just five minutes later, the contest ignited.

Spurs endured a nervous spell of Liverpool pressure and Michael Owen almost squeezed home narrow-angled shots with the home defence fully stretched.

Fowler almost found an equaliser following a far post cross, but a timely and instinctive intervention from Sol Campbell kept the ball out.

Graham's influence on the Spurs team was again clear with Fox and Darren Anderton both working hard in their own half to stem the Liverpool flow.

Occasionally the gaps appeared however, and only a superb tackle by Andy Sinton prevented Fowler forcing home a Danny Murphy centre.

Spurs had chances to wrap up the points but Armstrong squandered one opportunity and Paul Ince cleared off his own line to prevent Armstrong forcing the ball home following a Ferdinand header.

Spurs just about deserved their victory but still needed a block by Campbell to repel Berger's ferocious late volley.

Meawhile, across London at Selhurst Park, a brace of goals from Jason Euell brought Wimbledon a hard-earned win over Coventry City.

Coventry had the better of a scrappy first half but could not find the finishing power required to take the lead.

The game desperately needed a goal to bring it to life and it came nine minutes after the break thanks largely to the pace of Darren Huckerby.

The Coventry striker collected a long ball from defence, swept past marker Dean Blackwell and charged into the box where Chris Perry clumsily halted his run.

Referee Steve Dunn pointed immediately to the spot and McAllister sent keeper Neil Sullivan the wrong way to put his side in front.

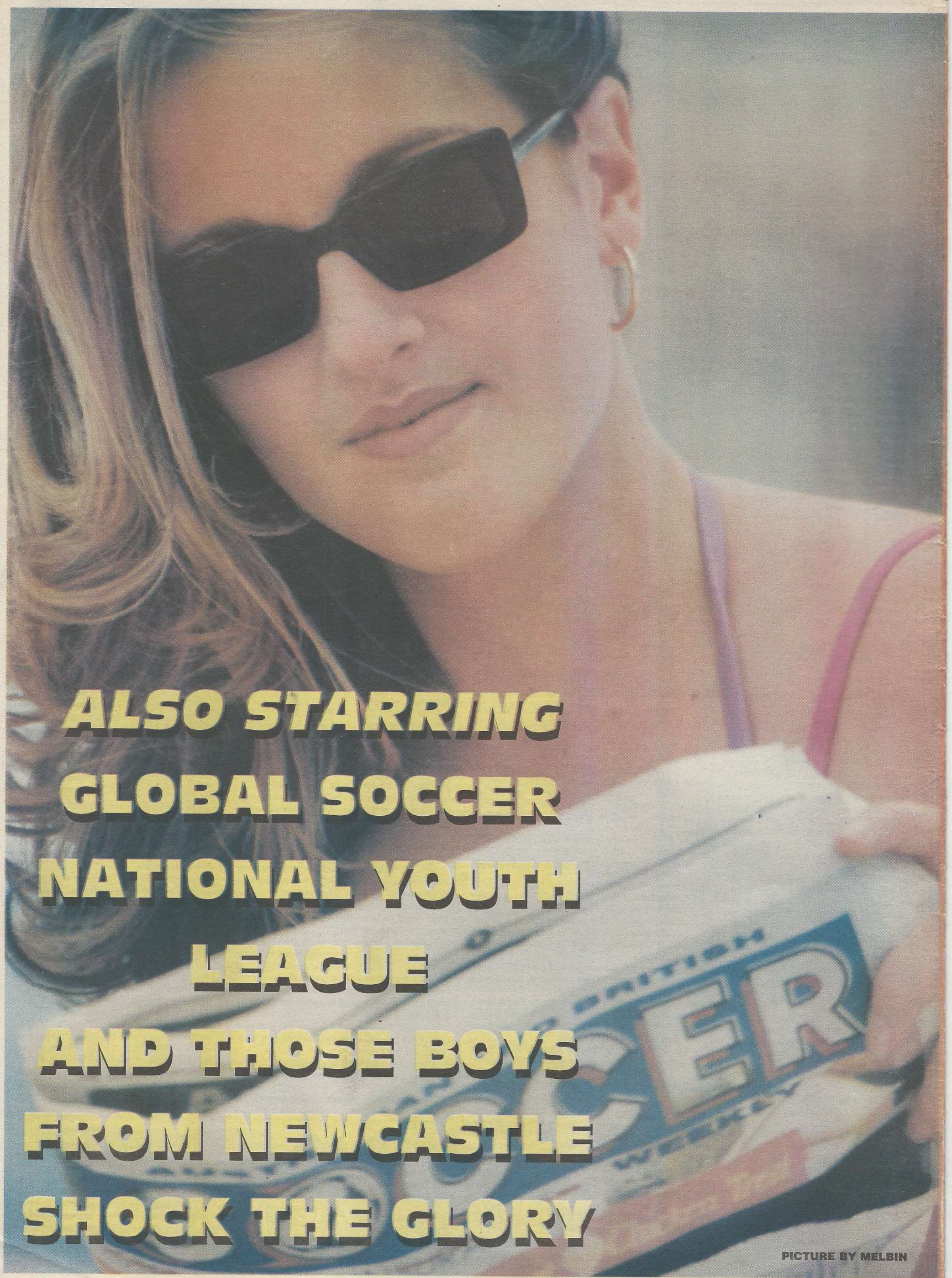
The goal lit up the game and Kinnear's men finally found their fabled fighting spirit. Neal Ardley and Perry both went close but it was Euell who struck to level the scores 19 minutes from time.

The Coventry defence afforded him too much time and space to control a Ben Thatcher pass and rifle home from eight yards for his fifth goal of the season.

The strike galvanised Wimbledon and they drove forward in search of the winner, which came seven minutes from time.

Again Coventry gifted Euell time inside the area and he showed composure to cut inside Paul Williams and hammer the ball home.

Euell's contribution ended Coventry's impressive run of results at Wimbledon. This was only their second defeat in eight visits. Gordon Strachan's side wasted a host of good opportunities in and around the penalty area and could not register an all-important goal to keep up their fine record.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